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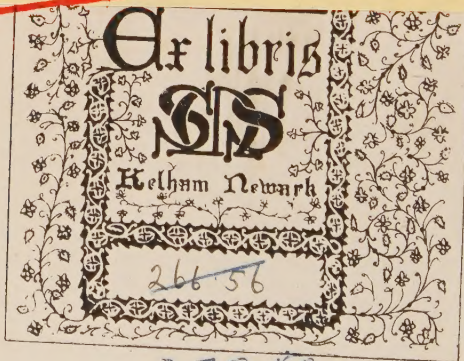
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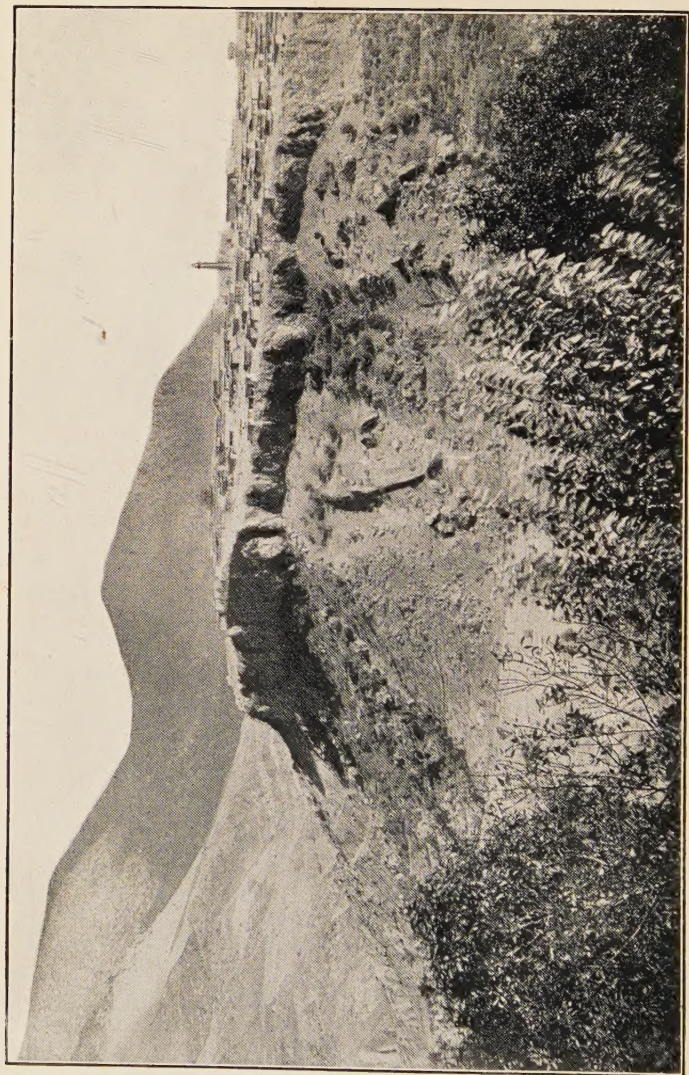
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KURDS AND CHRISTIANS



AMADIA

KURDS & CHRISTIANS

EDITED BY

THE REV. F. N. HEAZELL, M.A.

AND

MRS. MARGOLIOUTH

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INTRODUCTION

A QUARTER of a century has passed since the Church of England decided to send teachers to the Nestorian community. The Archbishop's Mission which was founded in consequence of that decision has two features which distinguish it from all similar agencies: it works among people who solicited its presence, and it confines itself to the services which those people demanded of it. The present seems a fitting time for collecting a series of documents elucidating and chronicling the origin and progress of the enterprise.

A selection has therefore been made from occasional publications of the Mission, with a special view to preserving documents of historical importance, and to illustrating the various sides of the work. Some of the articles included are signed by names likely to be long remembered and affectionately cherished by the Nestorian community; reference may specially be made to the late Rev. W. H. Browne, who after many years of beneficent activity as medical and spiritual counsellor was laid to rest in that mountain village which he had made his home. Few emissaries of the Church can ever have sympathised so fully with the communities to which they were sent, or so completely won their confidence. But the whole record is one of single-minded devotion, and the employment of good and perfect gifts in a commendable cause; and in several cases the work done in this distant region has proved

valuable discipline and preparation for evangelisation and ministration here at home.

To those who follow the politics of the Nearer East, the information afforded by the missionaries about the working of constitutional government in the Ottoman Empire will be of great interest. It may be pointed out that the sources of the information are unusually trustworthy and impartial.

DAVID S. MARGOLIOUTH.

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BE THY CROSS A GUARDIAN, BE THY CROSS A HELPER;
BE THY CROSS TO US A WALL, IMPREGNABLE BY THE ENEMY.

(From an ancient Assyrian Service Book.)

ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS IN KURDISTAN

CHAPTER I

HIS GRACE Archbishop Benson requested Mr. Athelstan Riley, M.A. of Pembroke College, Oxford, F.R.G.S., to undertake a journey in the autumn of 1884 to North-Western Persia and Kurdistan, with a view of ascertaining the present condition of the Assyrian or Nestorian Christians, and the state of the Mission sent thither in 1881 by the late Archbishop Tait and the Archbishop of York.

The information acquired by Mr. Riley in the course of his two journeys to Persia and Kurdistan, being more full and consecutive in his second Report, we pass over the first to quote from the second, but give from the first Report two out of three letters entrusted to him for the Archbishop of Canterbury.

LETTERS

Entrusted to Mr. Riley by :

I. Mar Shimun, the Patriarch and supreme Ruler of the Assyrian Church and nation.

II. Rabban Yonan, or Rabbi Jonah, a learned anchorite who dwells in a little room attached to the church at Qudshanis.

LETTER I

Rûwil Shimun by the grace of God Patriarch, Catholicos of the East, ruler of the ancient Church of the Chaldæans.

To his Grace Edward Archbishop of Canterbury and Metropolitan, and general (or universal) ruler of all England and all her possessions, complete in honour and glory, this is brought near with loving greetings.

The writing of your Grace on the 8th of the Western month of August, 1884, with joy was brought to our hands by the most excellent Athelstan Riley, your beloved son in our LORD and our honoured brother in CHRIST, student of Pembroke College in the city of Oxford; by meeting whom and seeing him and by his words we have found hope and confidence for the fulfilling of our requests which in our writings were brought before the blessed former Archbishop and also before your Grace. In which we described for your Grace the state of our ancient people, which was eminent and affluent in times past, and has come to this feebleness at the present time. And it seems to us that there is no help nor support from any other place whereby we might be strengthened; because all are our enemies except the pure and cleansed [reformed] Church of the Archbishop. And if your compassion neglects her as hitherto it has neglected her, she will be dispersed and perish among her enemies, and in a short time her name and memory will vanish for ever.

We have spoken by word of mouth with your honoured messenger about our requests and petitions, that we might have a school in Qudshanis and another in Urmi, firstly for the instruction of presbyters who stand at the head and their instruction in the Canons; and then smaller schools for the villages. And also a printing press to print Church books which are needed for holding services and the

Sacraments. And it is clear that for these we require money and funds.

And that which ye have written, that "they strongly desire help also from your people," this we did not believe to be possible. For since the departure of the honoured Dr. Cutts evil years have come upon us, and by many oppressions that have befallen us the wealth of the labourers has perished by robbery and theft and plunder, and our race is greatly impoverished until what we need even is not collected from the community. On this account our third request is that you would take care for the defence of our nation from those wrongs which in various ways are done to it by our enemies, and especially to our soil and lands, which are bought and sold by royal decree (wickedness?) to the Kurdish chiefs and others.

For the purpose of confirming those things which we have described we beg that your Lordship will take care to choose and send zealous men full of the HOLY GHOST, in whom your love shall be fervent in seeking for the rational sheep of CHRIST'S flock, like the good and excellent Dr. Badger.

We believe that love and strength and zeal for the Church are found in you more than in those who rose up before you, and that you can rouse the mind of the council of your kingdom that they may do their duty in the matter of government; and likewise to incite and make zealous the spirit of the rich and noble and powerful of your famous and blessed Church of England, that she may open her hand to give goodly alms, which will be the means of uniting the four portions of the Chaldæan Church into one. After this the goodly Church of the Archbishop shall see that she has brought forth to herself a daughter youthful and pleasing in aspect and in brave deeds in the Eastern Church. Then shall be established a crown of victory and a great treasure in heaven for the Archbishop who cared

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for them, and for the Bishops and presbyters who laboured, and for their messengers who bore the burden and heat of the day, and for the rich and noble who put their money into an incorruptible treasury for ever and ever. Amen.

Given in our palace on the 7th day of the Eastern month of October in the year of CHRIST 1884. From your true brother,

RÔWIL SHIMUN



Seal

LETTER II

Rabbi Yonan, a stranger, poor and needy, despoiled and oppressed, needing help from Christianity (Christendom), who is not worthy of the name and rank which by grace is given to him, even that of an Evangelic Deacon, unworthy either of name or of remembrance or of intercourse with the faithful, or of fellowship with the clerical assemblies of the sons of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Church which is in all the ends of the earth, and in the four quarters of creation; in which the discreet wisdom of GOD is revealed, the mystery which was hidden from worlds and ages in GOD, who created all, and it was declared by the knowledge of the adorable Persons of the sovereign Trinity. In which truly we take refuge, the exalted with the lowly, the nine ranks of the heavenly churches and the nine degrees of our earthly church, which enclose within them in the gospel net by the preachers of the gospel, both Jews and Arameans, and the divided people who desire war. Peace which the archangel proclaimed to the Virgin of our race by Him who is GOD and man, perfect and complete in the equality of natures and persons of one Sonship, one Person; who by the HOLY SPIRIT took flesh and became man, and the first-born from the dead, and the Father of the adoption of sons for the world to come: who became the Mediator of the

New Testament between GOD and man, and destroyed the hedge which stood in the midst, and the enmity, by the sacrifice of His human Body and the Blood of his fleshly Person, and came and preached peace to us that were far off and to them that were near. This very peace we give to all who accept our peace [or salutation], we Eastern Chaldæan Nestorians, although we are a reproach amongst the nations and an abomination accursed amongst the peoples. We all indeed finally give peace [or greetings of peace] although we be not worthy, to the star shining in a gloomy night and to the one watchful shepherd and careful pilot and firm pillar who is the great priest Edward, Metropolitan of England. Whose sealed letter came unto us in these days in which also our writing is penned, and it is sent by the hand of the desirable youth Athelstan Riley, apostle and messenger and a pleasant odour and acceptable sacrifice and pleasant before GOD and pleasant also to men. For such as he is we thirst, and such as he is we receive. If you remain towards us according to the promise that is between us we are content with this; we have no complaint at all against anyone, if it shall be according to the law of your kingdom which deceives not. And now forthwith this indication is enough for thy wisdom. Farewell.

RABBAN YONAN.

The Chaldæan October :

8th of it, 1884, of CHRIST.

FROM MR. RILEY'S "NARRATIVE OF A VISIT TO THE
ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS IN KURDISTAN."

Much having been heard of the Assyrian or Chaldæan Christians on the return of the Euphrates Expedition in 1837, the Royal Geographical Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge united to bear the expenses of an expedition to the Assyrian country, and thus

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Mr. W. F. Ainsworth effected an entrance into the Kurdish mountains in the year 1840.¹ This expedition was followed by that of the Rev. George Percy Badger in 1842,² who was despatched by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Howley) and the Bishop of London (Dr. Blomfield) to assist Mar Shimun in the education and improvement of his people, and to open communications with Mar Elia, the head of the Papal Chaldæans, who was believed to be inclined to enter into amicable relations with the English Church. Dr. Badger remained in Assyria for a year at the cost of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, but, the former Society withdrawing from the work in 1843, Dr. Badger was recalled. He had already commenced educational work amongst the Assyrians.

During the mission of Dr. Badger the great Kurdish insurrection, under Bedr Khan Beg, took place: thousands of Christians were put to the sword; and Mar Shimun himself, flying from the infidels, obtained a shelter under Dr. Badger's roof at Mosul. The fact of the presence of an English priest as a counsellor and protector during the greatest calamity that has befallen their nation in modern times may perhaps explain the devotion the Assyrians have ever since exhibited towards England and England's Church.

Being thus bitterly disappointed of English support, it was long before the Catholicos of the East applied to our Primate: but occasional appeals of a more or less private nature reached England between 1843 and 1868.

In the latter year a formal petition, signed by three Bishops, five *Maliks*, or chiefs, thirty-two priests, and eleven deacons, was forwarded to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. Moved by these persistent supplica-

¹ See Ainsworth's *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*. 2 vols. Parker, 1842.

² See Badger's *Nestorians and their Rituals*. 2 vols. Masters, 1852.

tions, the two English Archbishops commissioned the Rev. E. L. Cutts to undertake a journey to Kurdistan in 1876, for the purpose of obtaining more definite information respecting the Assyrians and of the way in which help could be most usefully given to them. Dr. Cutts has published the account of his journey and the way in which he was received by Mar Shimun and his flock, in *Christians under the Crescent in Asia*. The result of Dr. Cutts's report was the sending out of the Rev. Rudolph Wahl, an Austrian by birth, but in Anglican Orders (of the American Church) in 1881 by the late Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Tait). In 1884, serious difficulties having arisen with the Turkish and Persian authorities, I was commissioned by the present Archbishop of Canterbury to visit Assyria and Kurdistan in the autumn of that year and to draw up a report upon the state of the Mission and its future conduct. It being found that Mr. Wahl was not a *persona grata* to the Assyrians, and that his nationality was an insuperable difficulty to obtaining for him the necessary protection, this clergyman was withdrawn in 1885.

Meanwhile great exertions were made by his Grace to re-establish the Assyrian Mission upon a permanent and satisfactory basis, it being felt that the honour of the Church of England was more or less at stake, and that the devotion of the Assyrians to the English Church, after nearly half a century of disappointment, deserved an adequate response.

In the spring of 1885 the Rev. W. H. Browne, LL.M., one of the clergy of St. Columba's, Haggerston, volunteered for Assyria; and in the autumn of the same year, Canon Maclean, M.A., late Scholar of King's College, Cambridge, placed his services at the disposal of the Archbishop for five years, with the approval of his diocesan, the Lord Bishop of Argyll and the Isles. The spring of 1886 was spent in making due preparation for the establishment of

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the permanent Mission and in correspondence with the Patriarch of Antioch, that all might be done in accordance with the order of the Church. Everything having been satisfactorily arranged, a farewell service was held in Lambeth Palace Chapel at 8.30 A.M., on Wednesday, June 2nd, the Archbishop of Canterbury celebrating the Holy Eucharist, assisted by his domestic chaplain, the Rev. Montague Fowler, Canon Maclean and Mr. Browne ministering as Gospeller and Epistler. His Grace delivered an address, and afterwards gave the Holy Communion to those who were present. The two Mission priests then received a special benediction at the hands of the Primate, and a few hours later the Assyrian Mission started for the East. His Grace having commissioned me to conduct the Mission to Assyria, to introduce the clergy to the Patriarch and Bishops, and as far as possible to arrange matters satisfactorily with the Turkish and Persian authorities, I left England shortly after the clergy, who went by way of Constantinople, and joined them at Tiflis. Some delay was caused by the unwillingness of the Russian Government to allow the Mission to pass through Russian territory, but, this difficulty being overcome, we at length arrived at Urmi on August 9th. Ten miles from Urmi we were met by Mar Gauriel, the Bishop of Urmi, at the head of about two hundred of his people, clergy and laity, and so escorted to the town. The Sunday following, the Holy Eucharist, according to the English rite, was celebrated in the Assyrian Cathedral of St. Mary, in the presence of the Bishop and an overflowing congregation, when Canon Maclean briefly addressed the people, through an interpreter, setting forth the object and aim of the Mission, and how the work would be conducted with the approbation of Mar Shimun and his Bishops, at whose earnest entreaty it was commenced.

From Urmi we crossed into Turkey, entering the

mountains of Kurdistan from the Plain of Gawar, shaping our course for Qudshanis, the Patriarch's village. At Shwawuta, a village six hours' journey from Qudshanis, we met the Patriarch, Mar Shimun, Catholicos of the East, and I presented to his Holiness the Mission priests with the letter of our Primate. We travelled together to the Patriarchal seat, and when we had arrived within an hour's ride of that place were met by the Rabban Yonan, the Hermit of Qudshanis. I had made the acquaintance of this remarkable man in 1884. The last of the theologians of "the Church of the East," the last of her monastic order, a man whose reputation for saintliness and learning had spread far beyond the limits of his own Church,¹ and whose influence was co-extensive with the Assyrian nation, he had left his retreat in the valley of Tyari, in the year 1883, and had taken up his residence in a little cell attached to the church at Qudshanis in the forlorn hope of being able to save the Assyrian Church from the destruction which seemed inevitable. Here he employed his time in training Mar Auraham, the young Patriarch-designate, teaching the children of the village, and copying the old Assyrian MSS. I had much conversation with him in 1884, and he had entreated for help from England. "I am old and alone," said he; "what can I do?" and he had promised to use all his influence on behalf of our Mission if this assistance should be sent to the Assyrian Church.

His joy at the sight of my return with the long-expected English priests can be imagined; he absolutely fell upon our necks and kissed us, and then taking his staff preceded us to Qudshanis. The old man cherished the idea of going himself to Urmi to see the opening of the college, but it had been otherwise decreed. One day, about three weeks after the arrival of the Mission at Qudshanis, he went down to bathe for his health in a sulphur spring at some distance

¹ He was invited to the last Vatican Council.

from the village, and never returned alive ; it was supposed he had been taken with a fit whilst in the water. The English priests were almost the last persons he ever spoke to on earth, and they followed him to his grave, when, amidst the tears of the Assyrians, he was laid to rest in the little cemetery of Qudshanis. Truly a wonderful *Nunc dimittis* ! “ Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.”

The Patriarch summoned the Matran, or Metropolitan, Mar Isaac, to Qudshanis to assist at the deliberations on the manner in which the work of the regeneration of the Assyrian Church should be begun. The Persian Bishops also came for the same purpose. The college and school, opened at Urmi this winter, are the outcome of their deliberations.

After the arrival of the Matran, and before the death of the Rabban Yonan, I undertook my second and longer journey, following the course of the Zab through the Tyari country to Amadia, and thence to Mosul, starting from Qudshanis on September 4th. At Amadia Mar Shimun's country ends, the Assyrians south of this Kurdish town belonging to the Mosul Patriarchate, now united with Rome. The line is not exactly drawn, and in the valley of the Supna there are still eight old Assyrian villages, which Qasha Auraham, a learned priest of the Old Church, has with difficulty, kept loyal to Mar Shimun. The Dominican missionaries extend considerable protection to the Roman Assyrian villages, and thus the temptation to join the Roman communion is very great. The Americans also have sent agents from Urmi to endeavour to found Presbyterian schools in this valley, but hitherto unsuccessfully. From Amadia I proceeded *via* Daoudia, Bebozi, and Sheikh Adi to the Plain of Mosul. I visited the ancient Assyrian monastery of Rabban Hormizd, now Roman, and so reached Mosul. Here a surprise awaited me. Instead of



KIRKUK

the whole Mosul Patriarchate united with Rome I found a separate Assyrian communion of considerable size that had abjured the Roman obedience in 1873, and had since remained as an isolated Catholic communion, under the supervision of the Matran, Mar Elia Melus, a prelate of learning, and, by all accounts, of piety and honour.

Out of the six Assyrian or Chaldæan churches in Mosul (which all belonged to Rome before 1873) four are the property of this independent Catholic Chaldæan Church. Many of the chief families of Mosul have thrown in their lot with this Church, notably that of Rassam, well known in connection with the Layard exploration, and now represented by Mr. Nimrod Rassam. The great village of Telkief, near Mosul, containing one thousand houses, is chiefly non-Roman, and the church is in the hands of the independent Chaldæans. In the other villages round Mosul the churches are in the hands of the Romans, and the inhabitants, owing to pressure, have outwardly conformed. Two monasteries, Mar Elia and Mar Michael, have renounced the Roman obedience, and twelve priests in Mosul are under the jurisdiction of Mar Elia Melus. A printing press (with firman) is attached to one of the churches. A Bishop, Mar Audishu, is under Mar Elia in charge of a similar separated Catholic Chaldæan Church at Malabar in India.

From Mosul I returned to Amadia, and then striking in a N.E. direction crossed the Zab and passed through the Assyrian valleys of Tyari, Tkhuma, Baz, and Jîlu. I usually stayed in the houses of the *Maliks* or chiefs of the Assyrian tribes. At Jîlu I remained two days, at the request of Mar Sergis, the Bishop, who wished me to be present at the festival of the Exaltation of the Cross, a day kept with great solemnity by all Eastern Christians. Finally I emerged from the mountains at the Plain of Gawar, and then crossed the frontier into Persia, reaching Urmi on Michaelmas Eve. The Mission priests had already returned

from Qudshanis, and were busy furnishing the Mission house, and laying in stores of every kind for the winter. I left Urmi ten days later, on October 12th, after paying a farewell visit to Prince Jansis Mirza, the Governor, and travelling via Tiflis and the Caucasus, reached London on All Saints' Day.

THE COUNTRY OF THE ASSYRIANS

The Assyrians live partly in Turkey, partly in Persia. The map shows their position, between Lake Urmi, Lake Van, and the River Tigris. Their numbers are probably about 100,000. By far the larger part of the nation inhabits Turkey ; here too, are the Patriarch, the Matran, and all the Bishops except two, Mar Gauriel and Mar Yonan. Their country in Persia is flat, comprising the Plain of Urmi and the Plain of Salmas to the north of the Plain of Urmi and separated from it by a ridge of hills, which stretches from the Turkish frontier to the Lake of Urmi. These plains are extremely fertile and carefully cultivated. The owners of the soil are chiefly Mohammedans. The two towns are Urmi and Diliman, the latter in the plain of Salmas.

The Assyrian country on the Turkish side of the frontier is totally different from that on the Persian. Its chief features are bold and grand mountain ranges, separated by deep and narrow valleys, the fortresses, so to speak, in which the Assyrians have been enabled to preserve the Christian faith amidst the dominant Mohammedan races. There is one valley of considerable size, a small plain indeed, in the mountains, called Gawar ; but, with this exception, the mountain ranges extend to the Plain of Mosul, where they suddenly cease at a day's march from that town. The river Zab flows through the heart of the Assyrian country and falls into the Tigris below Mosul. The majority of the

population is Kurdish, the Assyrians come next in point of numbers, the remainder being made up of Yezidis or devil-worshippers, Armenians, and a few Jews. There are also some Turkish officials, but the Porte usually employs Kurds in the government of this province. The Kurds (a Mohammedan people) are the natural enemies of the Assyrians, and live side by side with them. Struggles are almost constantly going on between them, frequently producing actual conflicts.

The Assyrians of Turkey are divided into two classes, the *Ashirets* or tribal Assyrians, and the *Rayahs* or non-tribal. The former inhabit the valleys of Tyari, Tkhuma, Baz, Jîlu, Diz, Walto, and Etal; they are under *Maliks*, or chiefs, and rarely leave their valleys, where they live undisturbed by the Mussulmans, though their flocks are frequently carried off by freebooters, as the valleys, from their extreme ruggedness, do not afford sufficient pasture, and the Assyrians have to feed their flocks outside their natural fortifications. These tribal Assyrians are wild and savage; schools are practically unknown amongst them; their priests and deacons are frequently incapable of reading or writing, and are generally ignorant of the rudiments of the Christian faith. Even the Bishops are better judges of a rifle than of a doctrine. Preaching is absolutely neglected, and the holy mysteries, though validly celebrated according to the ancient rites, have become almost meaningless, both to the priest who officiates and the people who assist at them.

The *Rayahs* or non-tribal Assyrians are in a pitiable condition. Their villages are generally the property of Kurdish chiefs, and they themselves little better than slaves. They are taxed up to starvation point; their houses are hardly fit for human habitation; men, women, and children go about scarcely covered from the winter's cold by a few rags: and yet apostasy from Christianity, which would bring them instantaneous relief from their sufferings, is

almost unknown. I know no more touching sight than the interior of one of their poor churches ; the old priest clad in a vestment of the meanest material, repeating hesitatingly the prayers that have come down from the cradle of Christianity, the poor villagers pressing forward to kiss a little common wooden cross, the emblem of our holy faith, the monotonous chanting of the congregation conducted in low murmurs as if they were afraid of being heard outside—a scene almost without a parallel, since the days of the catacombs.

TEACHING OF THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH

The Assyrian or Chaldæan Church accepts the first two Œcumenical Councils of the Christian Church, and, as has been before stated, was cut off from the communion of the Catholic Church in the fifth century after CHRIST for rejecting the third Council, held at Ephesus, which condemned Nestorius and his opinions. The ancient theological treatises of the Chaldæans are undoubtedly tainted with heresy, and although they are now too ignorant to hold Nestorian doctrines intelligently, still ignorance will not purge heresy, and as a Church they refuse to this day to employ orthodox language, by rejecting the title “Theotocos” or “Mother of GOD,” and by using the expression “Two Persons” in speaking of the Incarnate Son of GOD. This loose language leads to all sorts of curious opinions (amongst individuals) respecting the Incarnation. The best instructed amongst the clergy are the most orthodox—a very hopeful sign. Indeed, from what the Mission has already seen of the Assyrian Church, the opinion advanced in 1884 has been rather strengthened than weakened, that there will not be much difficulty in removing the hindrances to Catholic communion.¹

¹ There is at present no communion between ourselves and the Assyrians.



SHEIKH ADI OF YEZIDIS

The Assyrians are behind no Christians in their veneration for the Holy Scriptures; their canon, however, seems to have been never thoroughly determined, and some of the Epistles together with the Apocalypse are rarely to be met with in MSS.

A veneration for the "Sign of the Life-giving Cross," and for the LORD'S Day, and a strict observance of the Christian fasts are conspicuous features of their religious life.

They have three Liturgies of high antiquity, or, to speak more accurately, one Liturgy with three variable portions. They count seven Sacraments or Sacramental Mysteries, their enumeration being somewhat different from that of any other Christian Church, but the two great Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are of course among the number.

They have maintained to this day the Apostolic Ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; the Bishops must be celibates.

CHARACTER OF THE ASSYRIANS

The miserable condition to which the Chaldæans have been reduced during the last five hundred years has had a powerful effect upon the national character. Whilst they exhibit a passionate devotion to Christianity, and will endure to the death rather than deny CHRIST, but little spiritual life exists amongst them. Still they will probably compare favourably with any body of Western Christians in morals, with the exception of certain special defects, of which the most prominent are jealousy of each other and quarrelsomeness—universal faults amongst Eastern Christians, and those which have enabled the Mussulmans to keep them so easily in subjection. Untruthfulness and

avarice are also national failings, resulting from the unfortunate position of these poor people. To proceed on a begging tour in England or America is the highest ambition of an Assyrian; for many have returned to their native land to pass their days in comparative wealth owing to the misplaced zeal of honest and charitable people in England, who are no match for the subtle Oriental. The appeal is usually on behalf of a school; in rare cases there is some establishment of this kind in existence, and if the applicant be more than ordinarily honest he may spend a third or even half of the sum he has raised in England on his school when he returns. *Any* Oriental begging for religious purposes should be suspected, but no support without the most careful inquiry should be given to persons calling themselves Nestorians, Persian Christians, Reformed Nestorians, Protestant Nestorians, Assyrian Christians, and the like, even if they present letters from their highest ecclesiastical authorities.

The work of the English Mission is described in the following letters. The school was opened on St. Andrew's Day, 1886, and the college a few days later. Qasha Oshana (Archdeacon of Persia), and a young Chaldæan of the name of Dawid (since ordained a deacon), were appointed as teachers under the English priests; the archdeacon is also the secretary of the Mission, being a pupil of the late Rabban Yonan, a considerable theologian, one of the most learned men in Assyria, and a great favourite with the Patriarch, Mar Shimun.

As soon as the winter breaks up and travelling becomes possible, the college and school will disperse, the priests, deacons, and boys will go to their homes and devote themselves to their agricultural labours, and the Mission clergy will at once commence their journey to the mountains. The

first work will be the establishment of some permanent station in Turkey. This is absolutely necessary for the protection of the Assyrians, and has indeed been made a condition by the Assyrian rulers. "I am willing to obey all the orders of the Archbishop of Canterbury," said the Matran to me, "on *one* condition: that next spring your Mission returns to Turkey and never leaves us again."

LETTERS FROM ASSYRIA.—NO. I

From Canon Maclean

URMI, AZERBIJAN, PERSIA,
Via Berlin and Tabriz.

January $\frac{16}{4}$, 1887.

MY DEAR RILEY,—I send you, as you request, as complete an account as I can of our life out here. If some things are repetitions of what you knew before, accept my excuse beforehand.

You ask as to our numbers. We have found it impossible to limit our upper school to twenty, and we have now thirty-six in it; some, however, do not sleep in the house, but in the town, and come here in the daytime. The way the school increased at first illustrates Oriental artfulness. A few came to say "might they attend the lectures? they did not want to eat and sleep here, as they knew we were full, they only wanted to learn." Of course we could not refuse such disinterestedness; we soon, however, discovered when our back was turned that they were eating with the rest, and if we did not look out *very* sharp they slept in the house too! It was a brilliant idea of Shamasha Yosip's making them bring their own beds, so we have not to provide bedding. But our house is packed as full as it possibly can be. We give the out-boarders fire and light,

and most of them are taken in for nothing, so they have not much to complain of. Our boys' school consists of twenty-five boys. They give us very little trouble. They sleep mostly at Mar Gauriel's in a big room; we provide matting, firing, and light. They go home every Saturday and bring their own breakfast and supper for the week on Monday; they dine here. The upper school is more trouble, on account of their incessant quarrels. An Urmian laughs at a mountaineer, and the latter brings out his "hanjar."¹ Then the Urmian is dissolved in tears, and we have to be called in. However, all goes well after a little, and they make friends again.

We have four "natir-kursis,"² one a deacon (Mar Sorishu's successor, about twenty-one years old, a nice, quiet fellow) and three boys, but one of them (Mar Sliwa, from Gawar) is away just now, on account of his brother's illness. Mar Sorishu's other "natir-kursi" is too young. So is Mar Yonan's. They must do for future years. Mar Auraham has unfortunately not come, but we have Yonan, the Patriarch's cousin (whom you saw at Qudshanis), and his younger brother, both nice fellows and very handsome in their mountain dress—in fact I think most of our scholars are good-looking. I was quite surprised to find the Chaldæans such a handsome race.

Our ordinary day begins with the Chaldæan prayers, before daybreak. (On Saturday evenings and on Sundays they go to Mart Mariam,³ but on other days they pray in our little chapel.) We thought that the noise they made in their singing, each one shouting, as a matter of course, in a different key, would be an effectual "dorm bell" as we used to say at King's, but we have learnt somehow to sleep through even that. However, we manage to get up for our service when they have finished. At 8.30 school begins for all; one of us opens the boys' school, Qasha Oshana the

¹ A dagger.

² Bishops-elect.

³ The Cathedral of Urmi.

upper school. This goes on with a short interval till dinner at twelve, when all sit down together on the floor. Flaring red tablecloths are laid, and the Persian bread spread along the edges for plates. Everything is studiously Oriental, and we have introduced no English abominations such as knives and forks. We used to take our dinner with them, but have been squeezed out by the press of numbers, and so now we dine separately. From half-past one till four there is school again, except on Saturdays, which are half-holidays. Mondays also are half-holidays, but the lessons are in the afternoon instead of the morning, so as to allow the priests and boys to come from their villages in time. From three to five we generally get out on our horses, unless the snow is too deep, or we pay visits to Serperasts and other Persians. Sometimes, however, we are kept in by the snow for days together. At five we receive visitors, Browne taking one day, I the next. This generally means hearing some complaint of Mussulman exactions or some quarrel with another Chaldæan (a *not* uncommon event!), or else our scholars come to say somebody has stolen their pens and ink, or has called them sons of a dog. This latter business we generally settle by telling the disputants to come again in so many hours' time—by then they generally have forgotten all about it. In the case of oppression if it is very serious we write to Mr. Abbott¹ at Tabriz, or even if there is a chance of its doing any good, we write a friendly note to the Serperast² (a new one since you were here: the old one is in disgrace—probably he did not offer a large enough bribe). In this we have followed Dr. Cochran's advice, who manages these things for the Americans. But all this "judgment business," as they call it, is troublesome and very difficult. At five our scholars sing (?) their service, and we follow with ours at six. Then we dine, and

¹ H.B.M. Consul-General.

² Persian Governor of the Christians.

school business is over. If we have any energy left, we print leaflets or prepare lectures. If not, we play backgammon.

Our course of studies is as follows:—For the priests: Old Syriac (Qasha Oshana), English and arithmetic (optional), (Browne), exegetical lessons on the Bible (Browne), lessons on the Creed (myself) and lectures on the Chaldæan liturgy (Qasha Oshana). Some also learn Persian from our schoolmaster, Shamasha Dawid. The boys have one hour daily theology from either Browne or me, geography, arithmetic, dictation, Persian, &c. from the schoolmaster, Old Syriac from Qasha Oshana, and English (optional) from me. All their lectures are given in the ordinary oral way, except mine on the Creed, which are written and translated by Mirza Auraham, who is most good in helping us. The men copy them in notebooks and keep them. Our schoolmaster is our interpreter for theology, and he is a very good one. For English and arithmetic we manage to get on without one. Such is our course of lectures. We should not have included English in it, but that they strongly wished to learn.

We generally spend our Sundays in riding out to the villages; twice we have been to consecrations of churches (on one of these occasions our schoolmaster Dawid was ordained deacon). On other occasions we either preach or listen to a Sunday School (if there is one) and dine *à la Persane* with some qasha or chief man of a village. But these Sunday expeditions take it out of one rather, as one gets no holiday during the week, and I doubt if we can keep them up very regularly.

We have to-day been giving the boys an entertainment, and after dinner we had a Persian edition of children's games, some of which are very ingenious. Some are like ours, but I dare say they got these through the Americans. The noise was deafening, but they all enjoyed themselves. Our Tyari deacon, Shamasha Aziz, as mad a fellow as ever lived, was the soul of the party. We have had ten days'

holiday for (old) Christmas, and now have three days' holiday for Epiphany, if the snow will let the boys go home.

FROM LETTER 5

May $\frac{26}{14}$, 1888.

We will first make a short summary of what we have done since May $\frac{30}{18}$, 1887. Shortly after that date we visited the Plains of Solduz and Souqbulaq, at the south end of the Sea of Urmi, in the company of Mar Gauriel, whose diocese extends to that limits; and were present at the consecration of the only Syrian¹ church in Solduz on the Eastern Pentecost. The Christians in that remote district are necessarily in a neglected state, and owing to their being much scattered, are difficult to provide for. We have put a village school there during the past winter. Later, in June 1887, we visited the Matran, Mar Khnanishu, in his mountain home, and had many interesting conversations with his Holiness, of which some account has appeared in the Church papers. The Matran in November returned our visit, and was our guest at Urmi for several days. In July we made a tour of the villages on the Nazi River, on the north of the town of Urmi, with Mar Yonan, the bishop of that diocese, whose episcopal seat is at Siperghan. When not travelling in this manner, we prepared a Catechism in Syriac for the use of our schools (which we have printed on the cyclostyles given by Cuddesdon and Ely Theological Colleges), an Old Syriac and an English Grammar, with the explanations in modern Syriac, and other matter for our scholars; we also superintended the building of our new schools.

On August 15, we left for Van. This journey was extended through the mountain districts to Mosul. On Octo-

¹ *Syrian*, i.e. *East Syrian*, here = *Assyrian* or *Chaldean*.

ber 3, Mr. Lang arrived in Urmi, and since that date we have divided ourselves as follows: Mr. Lang has been at Urmi, Canon Maclean at Siperghan, and Mr. Browne at Qudshanis, the village of the Patriarch. The Urmi schools have gone on as last year, except that they have considerably increased in numbers. Last year at Urmi, we had sixty-five scholars, boys and men. This year we have a total of ninety-four. The total number of scholars under our tuition has been about 800.

The Mountain Station was beset with embarrassments from the outset. The illegal detention of Mr. Browne by the ex-Vali at Diza until snow fell prevented his going on to the Ashiret country, and he remained as a guest of Mar Shimun at Qudshanis. This gave him the advantage of becoming thoroughly acquainted with and a fast friend of the Patriarch and his successor-designate and their households; and of seeing many men from various districts who from time to time came to visit their spiritual chief. It became immediately clear that the Turkish governors would not allow us to open a training-school for clergy, and they sent *gens d'armes* again and again to see what was being done at Qudshanis, and to endeavour to annoy Mar Shimun and his people into wishing the Englishmen to quit the neighbourhood.

The presence, however, of one of us with the expressed determination not to leave Turkey in Asia unless his place was taken by one of his colleagues was an encouragement, a visible pledge of the love in which the Church of England was extending her aid—slight and inadequate as it is at present—to this weak and oppressed Church in the East; and afforded the mountaineers the opportunity of learning that we are not, as they feared, only another and little better sort of proselytisers, but that we wish to educate in the Christian faith, not changing customs which are not contrary to true religion, but enabling them to worship with the understanding and with intelligent devotion.

The new High School at Siperghan.—We found last year that with our school at Urmi we hardly reached the important and populous district round Siperghan, the diocese of Mar Yonan. We therefore arranged for one of our number to reside at Siperghan, which is about eighteen miles from the town of Urmi, and to open a High School there. The district is particularly suitable for this purpose, as it is very thickly inhabited; the Christian villages are large, and close together. Having bought a house with three rooms, large kitchen, stable, three large store rooms and wood room, for what would at home be considered the ridiculously small sum of £31, we fitted it up for a school and missionaries' residence. We gathered twenty-six boys—having to reject, as at Urmi, double that number for want of room—and they have read since the middle of October up to the present time. The closeness of the other villages to Siperghan has made possible a constant inspection of the village schools in that district; while a weekly personal communication has been kept up with the town of Urmi, so that we have not been completely isolated.

We may mention that we have made it a stringent rule both at Urmi and at Siperghan that all the scholars should learn the language of their governments: that is, that Persian subjects should learn Persian, and Turkish subjects Osmanli Turkish.

The Village Schools.—These are another new venture, and like the Siperghan High School may be pronounced to be extremely successful. They opened towards the end of November, and continued for nearly four months. In ordinary winters this represents the time when the boys are not wanted to herd the cattle, but this winter in the Plain of Urmi the weather was so mild that the attendance at the beginning and end of the time was a little irregular, some of the boys being out in the fields. The scholars were of both sexes and of all ages. In most of the schools were

young men ashamed of their ignorance, who came to school to make up for time wasted in their boyhood; while side by side with them were infants learning their alphabet. The better scholars learnt Old Syriac and arithmetic, some Persian and other subjects. The schools cost on an average less than £4 apiece each year.

New Buildings.—Since last summer we have built new schools on one side of our courtyard at Urmi, containing two large schoolrooms, four smaller rooms, kitchen, store room, and wood room. We are thus able to have all our scholars under our own roof, which is a very considerable advantage. This building is a solid structure faced with red brick, and gives a quasi-academical appearance to the courtyard. It, however, only just gives us enough accommodation, and when our printing press is set up we shall even with our new building be pressed for room.

As was intimated in a note to our short report in February, the Mission has sustained a great loss in the death of Mirza Auraham Audishu. One of the principal ways in which he helped us was by undertaking what is here called “judgment business,” that is, he attended to all complaints of the Old Syrians in Persia, and when necessary appeared before the Mussulman authorities in support of the petitions. As we feel ourselves unable, even if it was otherwise desirable, to give up the time which would be necessary if we took up this business ourselves, we have on the nomination of the two Bishops in the Plain of Urmi appointed Usta Moushe, a resident in the town, to do so. The Roman Catholic and American Presbyterian missions have men for this purpose, who represent their people, and in that capacity appear before the authorities. Usta Moushe in the same way represents the Old Church. We endeavour, however, in every way to check quarrels among the Christians.

Plans for the future.—As it appears to be impossible,

with the present attitude of the Turkish Government, to set up a training-school for priests in Turkey, the next best thing that we can look for is to induce some of the mountaineers to come to Urmi. This they already do to some extent, but we hope to enlarge our small band of mountaineers, and to receive more promising students than hitherto. It will be very desirable, if they stay with us in the summer, to move out of the Plain of Urmi to a higher level for the three hot months, as to men who are accustomed to high altitudes the heat of the plain is then intolerable. This summer station would not involve an increase in the annual expenditure, as we should merely move our establishment from the one place to the other.

The mountaineers thus received would be free from the necessity of going home from spring to autumn to earn their share of the household's food and clothes, and would escape the chance of being robbed by Kurds, or ill-treated by the authorities in revenge for their coming to us, on their way to and fro, and they would, we hope, become capable of being religious and educational lights in their own villages; men able and willing to read their old books, and perhaps to extort some measure of respect from their oppressors. We have the honour to remain—Your Grace's faithful servants in CHRIST,

ARTHUR MACLEAN,
W. H. BROWNE,
A. H. LANG.

FROM LETTER 7, *June* $\frac{19}{7}$, 1889

In Turkey we have subsidised several village priests who taught scholars. Thus throughout most of the Syrian country Mission work has been going on.

Mountain Station.—Mr. Browne has spent the year

partly at Qudshanis, partly at Chumba in Tyari, and partly in travelling through mountain districts. We consider that the event has shown that the residence of one of our number at Mar Shimun's village or among the Ashiret (independent) mountaineers has been most useful for the work of the Mission, and indeed that it is the only way to win the confidence of that, the greater part of the nation. The Turkish officials have this year preserved a neutral attitude, and indeed the Vali of Van, to whose vilayet Hakkari (Mar Shimun's country) has now been added, has been more than courteous in his promises.

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The following extract illustrates life in the mountains: "In Lent, Mar Shimun sent for me from Chumba to go to Qudshanis, because his cousin was ill. The latter part of the three days' journey was difficult in places, owing to the frozen snow and fallen avalanches. About the middle of Lent there was a great downpour of warm rain and much snow melted; and the Zawa (Zab or Pison, Gen. ii.) was so swollen that it carried away all the bridges except those of Diza and Lizan, the two extremities of the Tyari Valley. However, goats'-hair ropes were stretched across the site of the bridge at Chumba; on these was an iron ring, and from the ring depended by four cords a deep basket, so that two sheep or a man might be transported at a time. When I was returning to Tyari, my friends at Qudshanis implored me not to trust myself to the basket, but to take a long and difficult road. But I thought that if the basket had carried men heavier than I am it would carry me; and that if a sheep had struggled out and got drowned I had sense enough to sit quiet. On reaching the pier of the bridge, I insisted on crossing first, and then my attendant followed. But when it came to the turn of the Qudshanis man, who had come to take back some medicine, he lay down and fought like a cat in self-



CHURCH OF MAR SAWA, TYARI

defence, and had to be left where he was. There really was no occasion for fear, though the launching of the basket called for skill on the part of the launchers, and where there were knots joining the short ropes together it was advisable for the passenger to pull the rope downwards that the ring might easily pass over the knots. Even some of the Tyari men declare they would not travel thus in mid-air."

Printing.—After many disappointments, we are glad to be able to announce to your Grace that we have begun at last to print. The difficulties lay chiefly with the press which was sent out many years ago, as we had to send to England for a missing portion of it. This alone caused a delay of some six months. We have also to teach our printers. We have had recommended to us a young man who has had some experience in the French press; and two of our head scholars are learning under him. We have engaged another of our scholars as binder. As an experiment, to give practice to the printers, we are printing our smaller catechism (for village schools), which will be very useful to us next winter. We hope soon to begin the Liturgies.

We still continue to use the Cuddesdon and Ely cyclostyle presses for school books, of which we only need a small number of copies. These have proved to be extremely useful to us.

New Courtyard at Urmī, &c.—In the early spring we bought a courtyard at the back of our present premises, and are now in a much more comfortable position than when we were pressed for room. We have also pulled down some very ruinous buildings at our entrance, which is now greatly improved. We are building in their place some store-rooms and offices, and also a few rooms, one of which is large and is intended for the week-day prayers of our scholars, and for sermons to them, and has a sanctuary at the east end for our own services. We are thus supplying one of our most pressing needs.

We are indeed glad to hear that some progress has been made towards securing the co-operation of Sisters. This would open up a sphere of work among the women and girls which we have hitherto been obliged to leave almost entirely untouched ; though now that Mrs. Neesan has come, we hope to make a small beginning at once.

The increase of our staff has enabled us to give much more time to the visiting of the villages in the Plain of Urmi and to preaching. In this way we have been enabled to reach in a much better way the adult population. We had always had sermons in our chapel for our boys, and occasionally visited the villages, but this year we have gone through them far more systematically and frequently. The preaching is managed in this way. The usual village morning and evening prayers are before sunrise and sunset. Our plan is to go to the villages in the middle of the day, and after the recitation of the Nicene Creed and LORD'S Prayer, and perhaps a Psalm, we preach informally either in the church, or if there is none, in a room. The men sit in front and the women behind ; all are well behaved, occasionally uttering pious ejaculations such as "O Christ," "Thanks be to Thee, O God." The people need both instruction in the principles of the Christian religion, of a very elementary nature, and also exhortations to carry out the moral law not only in letter, but in spirit. They probably know many of the minutest provisions of the book of Leviticus (which they strongly suspect ought to be in force now), but they have to learn the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount.

CHAPTER II

ARRIVAL OF THE SISTERS OF BETHANY

A special feature of the year (1889) has been the opening of a High School for girls by Mrs. Neesan, in preparation for the work of the Sisters of Bethany. The girls show great quickness in learning, and as was shown in their examination they have done in proportion at least as well, and perhaps better, than the boys.

Work amongst the women is most needful, for we find that the improvement of the men does not raise the position of the women, which is at present very degraded. To do away with this excessive inequality this work has been undertaken; and we trust that in raising the tone of the women we shall raise the tone of the home life and make the wife more of a helpmeet to her husband and children. Due regard will be paid to keep all national customs, as already we have done in the case of the boys, and the picturesque costume of the girls will be retained in the girls' school.

It may be of interest to describe the national dress of the Urmi Christian women. First comes a coloured shirt, over which is a sleeved waistcoat of a different colour; and an open coat unfastened in front, and descending to the knees. The loose trousers are so very full as to appear like a dress, and generally an apron and a belt of silver is added. On the head is worn a cap, ornamented or jewelled according to the position or wealth of the owner, and as a rule a

jewel falls on the forehead. Over this comes the white muslin veil, part of which is carried from the back of the neck to cover the mouth in the case of married women, but the rest of the face is exposed. In the case of brides a long veil of any colour falls from the head below the waist, and is used to cover the face entirely.

THE JOURNEY OF THE SISTERS OF BETHANY FROM LONDON TO URMI

On April 17, 1890, four Sisters of the Community of the Sisters of Bethany with their chaplain, the Rev. A. S. Jervis, left London by the night mail and travelled via Calais and Paris to Marseilles. Here they took the steamer for Constantinople.

St. Sophia with its ineffaceable stamp of Christianity interested the Sisters most deeply. This, and much else crowded with memories of the early days of Christianity, was viewed under the kind and able guidance of Canon Curtis.

Again embarking on the afternoon of Saturday, April 26, they had a prosperous voyage with picturesque companions and views, and could sketch and photograph occasionally as their steamer called at one picturesque town after another. At Batoum they began to experience the great kindness of M. Pobedonostzeff, Chief Procurator of the Most Holy Governing Synod of All the Russias, who, at the instance of Mr. Athelstan Riley, had not only arranged for the passage of the party through Russian territory, but also taken every precaution that thoughtfulness could suggest for their comfort during their rough journey. From this point the Sisters shall tell their tale in their own words, except so far as the journal has had to be abridged and condensed.

April 30th, Batoum.—As we looked out of our porthole the range of snow mountains which met our view in the early misty morning was beyond expression magnificent. The harbour was crowded with ships, the town, not so picturesque as the last three we have seen, full of life. We happily had arranged for a very early celebration, and well we had, for at a very early hour, 5.30, the police boarded us for our passports. Admiral Grave, to whom M. Pobedonostzeff had telegraphed, soon arrived, and, after some delay with our luggage, his crew, eight in number, in grand style rowed us ashore, and he saw us off by the 9.15 train from Batoum. The station at Batoum was redolent of petroleum; our train was driven by it, sprays of oil being thrown on the flame, and a pipe of oil being laid along the line all the way to Tiflis. After about two hours we entered a mountain gorge with a most exquisite mountain stream, which we followed in serpentine fashion for many hours. American azaleas, oleanders, and rhododendrons scented the way, may and wild roses, though maybe somewhat mixed with petroleum. This was an express train; it stopped at or between every station, and snailed along the rest of the way, but for this we were only too thankful, considering the country we were passing through.

We arrived at Tiflis about 11.30 P.M., not knowing a word of the language, the stations being written up in unknown characters, no names being called out, and with the most unconcerned-looking officials. However, as usual, things turned out for the best. M. Pobedonostzeff's influential kindness had prepared for us at the station the grandest soldierly officials with white gloves, who gesticulated to us, bowing. Two carriages and an omnibus waiting conveyed us to no mean hotel, where every member thereof seemed to be at our feet. For a time we felt there must be some mistake, we were taken for someone else; but no, our passports were taken, they said they had been expecting us for some

days. After a most sumptuous dinner at 12.30 A.M. in a private salon, we slept in still more sumptuous bedrooms.

May 1st, St. Philip and St. James, Tiflis.—Two Sisters, with Mr. Jervis, went to the beautiful Greek church of St. George, having been told that the liturgy was at eight o'clock. They found a few most devout people saying their prayers, but to their disappointment, that even in the cathedral no liturgy was said except on Sundays and great festivals. At midnight our train started for Akstafa; while waiting at the station we were literally hemmed in by a crowd of admiring inquirers, and felt as if we were wild beasts; at last they drew off George (the Assyrian deacon who had been sent from Urmi by Canon Maclean to meet us here, as a kind of courier) to ask him about our destination, &c. The scene was most amusing and the bright-coloured costumes charming.

Up the mountains we went full speed; the height seemed tremendous, till at last we were amid the snow, the trees like winter, yet cowslips in profusion. It was intensely cold, and we now saw the necessity of a guard; it was beginning to get dark, and we saw what might have been brigands. Soon we were all but amongst the clouds, looking down on a fearful chasm, and across that to the hills beyond, on which thousands of cattle were grazing, forming the loveliest scene. Eight o'clock, at Selinovka, the road became still rougher, and we had to leave our carriages, and with all our luggage were packed like herrings into a springless diligence.

Before Elinovka we passed Lake Sevan, about 100 feet below us, and drawing up at the post-house, alighted in a farmyard about a foot deep in mud. We found an empty room fairly clean, two wooden settles, a table, a mirror, and a complaint book! A samovar shortly arrived, and trout, for which the place is famed; it was said to be very

good by those who had spirit to eat it. This we found was the *only* room ; we gasped, and thought how useful were our Levings (sleeping bags and mosquito nets), and were at least thankful we had no strangers. But was this to last ? No ; in about an hour violent shaking of the door which we had fastened, and slowly but surely the room filled with women, children, and luggage endless. We, I think, bore it well, notwithstanding every window being shut at once. Mr. Jervis, most unconcerned, left his corner for the carriage in the yard, although it was freezing hard, and the landlord and George implored him to come in, saying there were so many wicked robbers about !

Saturday, 3 A.M.—We were only too thankful to leave this resting-place ! The morning was lovely : for many miles of descent we were still above the snow line, and thick ice around us. Our first post, reached about ten, looked so dirty we could not get out, but photographed some of the interesting groups of gazers from the diligence. We here had an instance of the magic of M. Pobedonostzeff's card—lots of people before us had to wait for their fresh horses till we were provided with our full number. Later we rested two hours at Erivan, a large town in a flat country. Here we were able to get our luggage taken in a separate conveyance, which gave us much more room and comfort, for we hoped to travel through the night to save discomfort. Our start hence was beyond words amusing, an outrider, the smartest of soldiers, the postmaster's assistant with a horn, the horses in the luggage cart covered with bells. As we dashed out of the yard, tired as we were, we did not know what to do for laughing. At every village the horn brought out groups of inquiring gazers. The roads being very bad after a thunderstorm, and the rain incessant, we were obliged to stop some hours in the small room of a post-house in the Plain of Aras. Starting before sunrise, we saw Mount Ararat standing out,

seemingly quite close, and now passed through glorious scenery, mountains on either side all the way.

At Julfa, the Persian frontier station, *kjavas*, detestable conveyances, awaited us ; they are a sort of basket hoisted up on a beast, and have green curtains to keep off the sun. So on Tuesday, amidst a shrieking, staring crowd, we moved off, but soon the *kjava*, not too securely mended before leaving Urmi, broke, and Sisters and *kjavas* mingled on the rough ground ; luckily no harm but a shaking, and that we were all pretty well used to. Two of us rode. This was our first really hot day and very little shade. There were mountains on either side of us some miles off, and snow in the distance. All that day we passed no house, and no one except one shepherd and one drove of camels. Our guide could give us no idea of the length of this stage ; we had hoped for rest at sunset, but went on and on till it was nearly pitch dark, and our horses took us over wonderful places ; they seemed quite to know their way, so we could but let them go—through streams, up steep places, over the narrowest of plank bridges—the two Turkish men remaining with the *kjavas* and baggage horses. At last, about eleven, we saw lights, and our horses carrying us through a river three feet and more deep we were landed safely in a yard, and had to wait in a crowd till George, who had lost his way, appeared. We had some food and tried to sleep in the most artistic of mud rooms, inches in water, the dirt beyond all description.

Saturday, May 10th.—Started for Urmi at eight. About ten a large party met us from Urmi, with the scholars from Siperghan on horseback, some eight in number. Every few minutes more of these arrived, all on horseback, rushing about like wild Indians, talking most of them broken English, telling us we should find Canon Maclean in about half an hour. At a village near we found him and Mr. Lang awaiting us, with luncheon all prepared. After a

rest, and having received the most hearty of welcomes, we started for Urmi. On reaching the city, about five o'clock, hundreds of people met us, including the Bishop. We seemed almost bewildered. Our crosses were seized and kissed with the greatest reverence.

Friends of the Mission will be glad to hear that the dedication of the little chapel at Sir, St. Michael and All Angels, took place on September the 29th, and of the chapel at Urmi on October the 25th.

SIR, *June 13th.*—It is astonishing how fast we are getting into Persian ways and means. The one thing not yet adopted is sleeping on the roof. It is the universal custom both at Urmi and here, and during the day they use the roofs of the houses for going from one place to another in the village. Of course our roof here is occupied—we are made aware of it in the night by sundry showers of dry mud coming through our ceilings. Sister E. J. went to bed last night with one of our large white umbrellas by her side ; she said she had eaten some of the mud the previous night quite involuntarily. However, she had used the umbrella for another purpose in the night, I found—to fight the mice and the insects.

June 20th.—We are having lovely days up here. Such breezes, such skies, such mountains! Such grand colouring, ever changing, and the view we get of Lake Urmi here is beautiful, and the wild flowers abundant. Just now the mountains close by are covered with white and yellow hollyhocks, very large and fine. The irises are splendid, and many flowers, which I have never seen in England. Since our arrival here at Sir the snow is fast melting off the tops of the surrounding mountains. The sky is bluer than any ideal sky one ever dreams of, and cloudless. We live on the mountains of course, wherever we can get a little shade

during the morning and early afternoon, and after four o'clock the sun leaves us a cool shady nook in a hollow of the mountain by a running stream, where we say Evensong every day. . . . We went to Urmi Thursday, leaving at five o'clock. Mr. Jervis, who had gone on before us that morning, rode back to look after us, because he had met some Kurds, and he waited to see that we were all right, but they had evidently gone up another path, for we had not the pleasure of a *rencontre*. . . . We stayed all day at Urmi to preserve cherries off the trees in our yard. There is such an abundance of them in our orchard, and no jam to be had for love or money. How I longed for you to be able to see us jam-making, great baskets full of large "white-heart" cherries just picked, under the trees, large wood fire, surrounded by bricks, on which we put some large iron caldrons; a real old witch in short yellow and scarlet petticoats, a coloured veil over her head, bare-legged, bare-armed, stirring one pot with a great wooden stick. Sister G. M., but little less witch-like, except for her dress, skimming the other pot, the other Sisters getting more cherries ready. The Bishop lent us the caldrons for making the jam, and Mr. Neesan superintended the whole business. We are getting on with Syriac slowly. Canon Maclean gives us a lesson every day. He is such a good teacher one ought to get on, but it is very difficult, both grammar and pronunciation.

The birds are extremely tame; they come into our rooms whilst we are in bed, hop about the room and on our beds, and several of them always attend our Offices, joining in most loudly. There is a lovely orange and yellow little bird, who sings like a lark and is very tame, but no one knows its name. Is it the Persian "bulbul," I wonder? The little village children here are darlings; such dark, intelligent, sweet little faces, beautiful soft eyes and graceful limbs, and their dress too is pretty. The little girls—quite

tinies I mean—only wear a little tunic, little brown legs and bare feet, and their heads just covered with a short muslin handkerchief or embroidered cap. The boys wear scarlet trousers and short bright blue tunics or coats, and a small red cap on their heads. They are so polite and gentle-looking. All the little girls we meet ask to come to our school. The women, too, want to come and learn the English “tongue.” The chapel and new rooms at Urmi are getting on very quickly; we long to begin work there. I am watching the building of the store-room with great interest. We have to store in every possible thing for the winter these next three months. Last week they buried great earthen jars of a kind of milk cheese (for the girls’ use in winter) in the earth in our yard at Urmi. This week if the caravans have come in we are to get in sugar, oil, and walnuts—the latter in great quantities; and we shall have to make a great deal of preserve and dried fruit—the latter is made by spreading the fruit out on the mud roofs of the houses and leaving it to dry in the sun. We are going to the city very early on Wednesday for our communions (the Visitation), and expect to remain all day preserving.

LETTER FROM SISTER KATHERINE MILDRED TO
THE ARCHBISHOP

URMI, *Dec. 13, 1890.*—We think the time has arrived when your Grace may be expecting to hear from us concerning the progress of the work to which you have sent us.

We opened our Schools on St. Michael’s Day, rather later than we intended, owing to the delay in finishing the house. We received thirty girls between the ages of eight and sixteen, chosen from a large number who came in from the various villages to be examined the previous week; only those who could read being accepted, as they have the means of learning this in their village schools.

Some girls were to have come from the mountains, but on account of the disturbed state of the country they were unable to do so.

The children are exceedingly docile, and quite above the average intelligence of the working class in England. I cannot say they have much sense of honour, or much, if any, real religious instinct, but plenty of superstition.

Our great difficulty has been the language. . . . We have a native priest attached to the school, who teaches the children and says the daily Office in their own church, to which we take them at sunrise and sunset. Mrs. Neesan teaches some hours in the week, and we take our share in the daily teaching, which consists of the Catechism drawn up by the clergy here, Bible teaching, Ancient and Modern Syriac, Geography, Arithmetic. It is not considered necessary to teach them Persian or Turkish as in the boys' school; they are, of course, instructed in every branch of housework.

Three of our girls left us a fortnight ago to teach in the village schools, which are opened for the winter months. We hope next year that we may be able to train them properly for this work, by having an Infant School attached to our present one, in which they can learn to teach.

Last month we commenced our work in the villages—that of instructing the women. We ride out twice a week, and have been to some twelve villages, taking the most distant ones before the snow falls. The women are gathered either into the priest's house or the schoolroom. We are always pressed to teach in the church. The priest seems surprised when we decline. The other day, visiting the Church of Mar Sergis, the priest there was most anxious we should go into the sanctuary, where only their clergy are supposed to go. I reminded him of this, but he merely said, "You are the same."

A large number of people have come. The women are

ignorant ; few know the Creed, few can say the LORD'S Prayer ; evidently little has been done by the parish priests in the way of instruction in the churches. They are very attentive, and seem very grateful for our coming. The great difficulty with the people, as far as one can see, is that they have the shell of religion and little else. From the smallest child upwards they have a thirst for knowledge. So one feels it is not merely their anxiety to be instructed in the faith that they may practise it in their daily life which brings them in such numbers. At present we have to use an interpreter for this work, though we can manage to give a class in the School without one.

The women are also very thankful for any medical aid ; they are exceedingly ignorant and superstitious about illness, and over and over again the children especially are just left to die. It has also been thought well we should visit the Persians who have called on us, and by so doing possibly indirectly improve the condition of the Christians in their villages.

EXTRACTS FROM OTHER LETTERS FROM THE SISTERS

Monday, Dec. 1, 1890.—Started for Dizatica at ten. Very cold, snow falling all day. Passing two villages we turned suddenly and came in view, at about some three miles distant, of, I think, the most lovely sight we have yet seen—the village of Saralan, built on a hill, standing straight out from all else, seeming quite close to the most exquisite snow mountains. We saw in a ruined wall a stork's nest, which has been there a great many years, the storks building there each year, and, as is their habit, several sitting at once. Now, of course, they have sought a warmer spot in Turkey. After leaving this village we cantered up a steep hill, on which Dizatica is built—beauti-

fully situated. Notwithstanding the snow, I was quite warm. We had come at a good pace here, about 18 miles in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. We again went up a not very straight ladder on to a mud roof, and thence into a small room, looking on to a river, which must in summer be very beautiful, now not much water, cattle going backwards and forwards. On the opposite side, large woods dotted with houses, the mountains covered with snow, very high trees standing up against them. After a most acceptable meal of rice and raisins, with a very old woman, the mother of the Shamasha, whose house we were in, crouching on the floor, and begging of me to cure the cough she must have had nearly all her life, we went into a large room below and had a splendid gathering of women and girls, so attentive, but with the exception of one old woman and the deacon's wife, who teaches in the village school, their knowledge was *nil*. I don't think they knew the LORD'S Prayer; at any rate, they did not say it. It seemed dreadful to come away and leave them. I asked whether two pretty children of about fourteen went to school. The people smiled, and replied—"They are brides; one has been married three years." Everyone nearly rushed at me with some ailment, and I had to deal out the medicines I had taken with me as best I could; it was most amusing. Then they all took us through the village to where our horses were, and we rode quickly to reach home before dusk. The roads are as yet so excellent, except in a few marshy places, that it makes it all so much easier—far better than in England; of course they would not do for driving. I am now getting quite used to going over a bridge that you would think a goat *might* cross.

Friday, 5th Dec., at Geogtapa.—The people actually poured in; there must have been quite 160; a real sight, for there was only just standing room, and one saw eager faces leaning against the pillars, for they could not hear sitting down. Few knew the Creed. "Why not?" I asked.

"No one has been to teach us ; why did you not come before ? Will you be our guest for to-night ?" I said we had a large school to look after. "But there are four of you," they said. A nice girl asked to be taken to our school. "If you'll have me, I will come, and not marry."

Monday, 8th.—We went over the mountains to Mar Sergis, a very small village nestling among the hills. The road not very good, and very steep, and the dirt indescribable. We went into the priest's house, where we were to have some refreshment. I soon proposed to look at the church, an interesting old church. Here they have weekly Communion. The people came in from the villages round, where they have no churches. There is a sort of cell in it, where madmen are supposed to be cured ; they go in and are bricked up. After pretending to eat some not very palatable food, I addressed about twenty very ignorant people, while in another corner of the room some children ate up the remains of our luncheon, and two beggars, arriving off a long journey, were most charitably being cooked for and fed. A bride was there, all veiled, which is the custom for some days after marriage. She did not mind, though, lifting her veil, and having a good look at us.

Monday, Dec. 22nd.—Started about 9.30 for Ardishai. Very cold ; snow began to fall. The Qasha and his wife are very nice people. In a very short space of time they got us a nice luncheon, whilst we warmed ourselves by the stove. The wife then took us to the next village, close by. They have just opened a school there. It is rather a Roman place, and in fact the nice Qasha, at Ardishai, has been one. The room soon filled, and just opposite to me, eagerly gazing at me the whole while, sat the brother of Mar Gauriel, whose house it was. Snow was now falling fast, so we hurried off. Heavier and heavier did it come down, a cutting wind straight in our faces the whole

way, over a stretch of wild moor of about 12 miles. At one time I was completely blind in one eye—it froze together. It was the weirdest sight to see in the distance some dozen camels. It would be difficult to picture the afternoon if one had not been out in it. The children met me with shouts of delight when I appeared—one mass of frozen snow. I was just a little cold, but got warm again. Luckily our horses had been roughed, with the exception of the one our man rode; he had the pleasure of two rolls on the snow.

Jan. 17th, 1891.—Canon Maclean asked me to look at a boy he thought very ill. . . . I found the poor little fellow very ill indeed, and suffering from fever, so I proposed to see the doctor in the morning, and did what I could for him for the night. He is a mountain boy; the other boys always insist on going home at once if ill.

Jan. 30th.—The boy better, but slowly; I have great hopes of him to-day, for he says he is not only dying but dead, and we are to bring his box, *i.e.* coffin, at once. I cannot say he is a good little boy!

Feb. 8th.—The sick boy is taking a turn. The clergy have sat up with him every night by turns for nearly three weeks.

Feb. 14th.—Oshana is most amusing—the sick mountaineer boy. He says he can eat nothing but what is cooked in the room, for they put drugs into it in the kitchen. Now he is getting better he insists on wearing a cap in bed, which is like a huge jelly-bag made of felt all bent about. It was the prettiest sight to see the dearest of little mountaineers of the same village, just about nine years old, offer him the cup and saying—“Drink, my brother, drink!”

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It is disappointing that the children marry so young that most of them leave school before they have been taught much. Fifteen years old is considered “old” for a girl

to marry here, and if a girl is not married by the time she is seventeen she is considered quite ineligible. Prangius, one of our nicest children, left school a fortnight ago, and is to be married before Easter to a Presbyterian, although her people are all "Old Church." The child herself is only thirteen. After their marriage they are mere drudges, and there is but little hope of getting hold of them unless the husband happens to be a nice fellow. Most of the Mission House scholars, boys, small and big, are married. Another girl of ours, Merionette, quite a small child, about twelve, was to have been married at Easter too, but she rebelled and said she did not want to marry, but to stay and "read" with the Sisters, so she is to remain longer.

Easter Eve.—Yesterday's furious south-west wind has made a wholesale sweep of the snow off the near surrounding hills, and Kisbuz is going to take the girls to find small flowering bulbs and grasses to put on our altar. Campan went before sunrise yesterday, searched the mountains on the way to Sir, and brought us back some sweet little white and pink crocuses and lovely delicate purple irises, quite small, but they look so wild and spring-like, and we have had a quantity of fresh green sprouting corn given us by some Mussulman neighbours, so we shall be able to have Easter flowers after all. Kisbuz is an untold treasure and help and comfort to us. Please send her a message sometimes; she asks us after every mail whether our "sweet superior Mother" knows "Kisbuz is working" for us, and whether she ever asks if she is a "good Kisbuz."

April 4th.—The people are all so distressed at Canon Maclean's departure; he is very much beloved, and will be dreadfully missed all round. A small American organ—a little beauty—has come from England for the clergy at the Mission. Sister E. J. is to play for them on Sundays and Festivals. It has travelled beautifully.

April 18th.—The "Yard" is indeed a sight to gladden

one's eyes now. The trees are a mass of lovely blossoms, quince, &c. Ezzack and Campan have been working quite hard, digging and sweeping and tidying, and the seeds sown but a few days ago are all springing up. The French Sisters most generously sent their gardener to us this week with slips and seeds, and roots of many of their vegetables and flowers. We called upon them yesterday. All their arrangements are very simple, everything spotlessly clean, and nice and orderly. We saw their "asile" this time—fifty infants, little day scholars out of their districts; they sang and recited, and "showed off" most charmingly. They are evidently most beautifully taught by *La Sœur Rose*, who is a Marseillaise, and the little Easterns sang and acted prettily with French Kindergarten songs and "*compliments*" with the most perfect "*accent du Midi*"!

Our scholars are very interesting children, and some of them most intelligent and useful, *all* so docile and teachable. It is a real pleasure to teach them. I give them a class twice a week now, an arithmetic class, and enjoy it greatly. At first I had to do the teaching through an interpreter, but now can manage it by myself, I am glad to say. Teaching, everyone agrees, is the best and quickest way of learning the language. The children help one wonderfully—they take great trouble, in a grave, sedate way, to correct one's mistakes and put one right. They are dear children—quite different in many ways to any class of English children—and they require *no* supervision at all out of school, neither for their lesson preparation, meals, or recreation. They are never up to any mischief, never punished, never in trouble of any kind or sort. There is no fear of not "getting on" with them as there would be with children at home, without a command of their language. We have thirty-three scholars, all boarders. It is getting very warm, but the days are most beautiful—one cannot understand why the climate is so unhealthy, both for malaria and rheumatism.

The sky is a cloudless blue, such an expanse of azure. The air clear and wonderfully transparent, everything as dry as dry can be, and yet is it not strange one should never feel strong and well?

SÎR, *June* 1891.—I cannot remember whether I have ever told you anything about this, our summer house. We bought a piece of land about two acres square; the spot is just behind and looking down on the village; the mountain rising behind us, another 1500 feet. Here we are about 6000 feet above the sea. It is curious to know that down in Urmi even, we are higher by 50 feet than Ben Nevis.

Our house stands in the middle of this piece of ground. On the ground floor is the kitchen, the priests' dining room and general refuge, if, for any reason, their tents are uninhabitable; then comes the chapel, with a passage and separate door. Outside are the stone steps leading to a balcony, and thus we get to our rooms, on the first floor, two nice large rooms and a smaller one in between. We use the balcony very much, for we have had the native straw mats fastened up on the top and so it is a shady shelter after noon. At night the woman servant and our girl spread their quilts on it for sleeping; and under its shelter, and outside the kitchen windows, the men-servants spread their quilts and sleep.

We are just divided by the spring from the hill which the clergy have chosen to pitch their tents on.

The inland Sea of Urmi in the distance can be seen perfectly clearly for the most part of the day, though it is about 18 miles away; but the atmosphere here is most deceptive as to distance. The sea is very, very salt, so that nothing can live in it, and of a most intense blue colour; and the shore on this side, which looks from here as if it might be the most delightful wide stretch of sand, is really a wide stretch of quagmire, thinly caked over with

the heat of the sun ; to stand on it quietly is impossible ; you must keep moving or you sink. There are lots of small islands of rock in the sea.

The mountains on the other side are peopled with the most inveterate robbers and plunderers. The more distant mountains are still covered with snow.

Just down in front are the trees which border the hill on which this house stands. Below, you must imagine how the village looks, like one big flat roof, with an opening here and there, up which, with a ladder, the people come, using the roofs as they do for all purposes ; many of the people now sleep out on them. To the right is a round pool of water, deep enough for the buffaloes to be washed in it ; the boys and girls ride them in, and then splash the lazy creatures over with the water. Sometimes one sees the buffaloes standing in shallow water, and the girls or boys wade in and throw the water over, and the animals poke their ugly noses up to it, as if they were thoroughly enjoying it. But often only the top of their backs and their noses are to be seen.

We have just watched a funeral go over the hills. A little boy of twelve died last night, and is being carried this morning to Mar Sergis, a village farther across the mountains, for burial ; in this country the funeral, of necessity, generally takes place only a few hours after death.

The coffin was carried on the shoulders of four men, and was followed by all the men of the village, the women going only a very little way, and, after a farther distance, the boys were sent back. They chant to a curious tone as they walk, so that it reminded me of the Irish wail. The different colours of the men's coats, with the red fez of the boys, looked so picturesque. This little boy had such a sad death : a week ago he laid himself down by the roadside just out of the village, and went to sleep, and was

wakened by feeling something lick his face, close by the eye, and then saw a snake steal away. He ran home frightened to his mother, and soon became ill; the doctor could do nothing, and so he died.

I have only seen two or three snakes, but in the mountain at Siperghan I hear that at this time of year no one ever goes up it, it is so infested with them.

July.—There are thistles here of beautiful colours, some like great blue balls, others all blue, stalks and leaves of a metallic blue. A very pretty yellow thistle and a dark red one will come a little later.

Some of the grasses are beautiful. Moss and fern are never seen. As a great rarity you sometimes find a greeny-looking stone, which is, I suppose, the beginning of moss, at the bottom of a hollow leading to a well where the sun cannot reach. Talking of wells, I have been trying to paint, and will do it some day, the women at the well here; some of the mountain dresses are most beautiful in colouring, and with long draperies. The women, carrying their pitchers on their shoulders, are most picturesque, with the graceful little kids jumping about them as they are being led to the water.

The holly-hock grows wild here, the white and pale yellow most common, red, pink, and mauve on the higher parts of the mountains. The wild roses are of bright scarlet and brilliant yellow; but now they are over.

LETTER FROM THE BISHOP OF URMI TO A SYRIAN
DEACON IN ENGLAND

URMI, *October 16, 1891.*

MY DEAR BELOVED DEACON,—I send greetings, with love, to you. I a thousand times with sighs remember my deacon, who has been separated from me all this time. . . . About the Missionaries and the Sisters of Mercy (the Archbishop's Mission).

They are broken-hearted and sorrowful. Mr. Jervis died on Wednesday night, at 11.30 on October 2nd, from pneumonia. Three American doctors attended him. The funeral service was held in the chapel of the Sisters. The procession took place through the great street from the front of the Mohammedan mosque towards St. Mary's Cathedral.

There were more than 700 men attending the funeral, priests and deacons, and so on. Three crosses were carried before the bier like banners, eight priests carrying the bier. Myself and Mr. Neesan went after the bier. The Missionaries with the Sisters were singing most solemnly before the bier. The American Missionaries came after, followed by the clergy, scholars, &c.. The Mohammedans were amazed and stricken with awe, seeing the cross in Mohammedan streets, as there has never happened such a thing before.

There were Mohammedan gentlemen representing the Government at the funeral. There was felt to be in the death of this English priest a great loss and sorrow, and indeed nearly every eye was shedding tears. After the interment the Missionaries and Sisters stood in order, and everybody went and shook hands with them, saying, "May peace and safety be on your head," according to our custom. I invited everybody to share in the funeral dinner in my house. All came with the exception of a few who thanked me with gratitude. Remain in peace. One who loves you.

YAQU GAURIEL (by grace of God),
Bishop.

FROM A LETTER BY A SYRIAN PRIEST TO CANON
MACLEAN ABOUT MR. JERVIS

Ever since you went away till we came down from Sîr in the middle of August he read with me Classical Syriac

and Philology; also all the Takhsa, which he translated into English; and similarly all the Psalter and the Qdhamuwathar (daily services). He was very quick in learning, and quiet and gentle, and all the time he never once spoke sharply or made me angry, or was angry with me, or I with him. For this cause especially my head grieves for his death and my eyes weep tears, &c.

BY ONE OF THE MISSION PRIESTS

Though not here eighteen months, Mr. Jervis had learned the modern Syriac scientifically, so that he could supervise printing of books in that tongue. He also knew enough Old Syriac to correct proofs, and was gaining knowledge every day. After six months' residence here he began to preach in modern Syriac, a thing almost unparalleled. He also worked in the School, teaching classes, examining, &c. He loved the boys much, and was popular with them, and will be much missed by all.

How his place is to be filled I know not. None of us who remain are Syriac scholars, and cannot supervise the printing. The Sisters think that his place as Chaplain is not easy to fill as worthily.

CHAPTER III

THE SCHOOL AT URMI

IT is really a fine building, shaped like a T, looking out on two large yards, the playground of the boys. Two stories are filled with pupils, to the number of 100, while each Missionary has a bedroom, and all share the common-room and dining-room.

Some of the rooms serve as class-rooms, but they are used by the boys as bedrooms at night, and they "take up their beds" every morning and pile them in a corner. In the room where they eat at low tables, rigorous rules for sweeping after each meal have to be made, in order to keep it fairly presentable for school.

Of the work.—Picture to yourself some forty deacons and lads sitting round the walls of the room with their hats on and their shoes off, as eager as possible to answer (by hook or by crook, alas!) their Rabbi's question, and as sulky as bears and as argumentative as scientists if they fail. One class will be studying the Communion Service in the Takhsa, another the Old Testament in Old Syriac, another the Service Book of Morning and Evening Prayer. One hour they will be racking their brains over Rule of Three or Decimals, at another murdering the "Queen's English" (they are most keen on learning English), and as we cross the yard we hear the bell ring and out come the younger boys from Persian, or Turkish, or Scripture History, or Astronomy.

The first impression is that they enjoy learning, and

when you see the fellows in their free time and holidays learning something by heart, or copying some old manuscript, one cannot help thinking that they have the making of an educated people if only they had an outlet for their education. The Christians in their love of learning are a thorough contrast to the Persians of Urmī, who seem to take an interest in nothing beyond their pipes and their shops. The deacons and boys appeared fairly intelligent, but they have not yet learned to use their brains originally, and are therefore weak in arithmetic.

And now the bell rings again, and you see the boys skurrying along to the chapel, and there they sit as quiet as mice while one of the deacons reads a sermon he has written out for Mr. Lang, or they listen to one of the Apostles (so the Missionaries are called), who tries to instil into them some idea of truth, honour, gratitude, or *esprit de corps*.

A BOY'S LIFE IN SCHOOL

Summer or winter, a little before sunrise, a bell is heard in the yard. Our boy rises, takes up his bed and his quilt, rolls them together in a coarse cover, which he ties, and places the bundle against the wall, so as to form a soft back for himself when he sits on the floor at lessons. Slipping on his coat, and when he nears the door putting his feet in his shoes, he descends to the quadrangle. Here he goes to a little stream, an offshoot of a mountain torrent, which flows, but not with its native snowy purity, through our court. He washes his face and hands, not merely as a healthy custom, but also as a religious and symbolical action, "so will he go to God's altar." Soap and towel he knows not, nor needs; he combs his hair—if he has any, for some boys are almost clean shaven, more so than the monks of old. Of brushes the nation is ignorant, nor has it any word for the same. Again a bell sounds, and our boy

joins the throng of some 70 or 80 deacons and boys standing round the chapel door. The names are read. Our friend enters the chapel, a red brick building, with a large Persian window, having a border of wood tracery of kaleidoscopic patterns, filled with stained glass. A curtain hangs behind the screen, so that chancel and throne—as they call the Holy Table—are not visible. On the ledge of the screen is a small wooden cross. The prayers are in Old Syriac, but our boy understands the meaning of every word, for he learns them in school. He shouts (we dare not say sings) in his own key, and gives his own version of the proper melody. At length he comes out, and puts on his shoes, if he is lucky enough to have any. Then the breakfast-bell sounds. Our imaginary boy scampers across the yard, to find little tables, a foot high, spread in a large room, ready for breakfast, or “a taste,” *i.e.* a “snack,” as the Syrians have it. The total number of dishes known to the Syrians is but five; only two kinds of meat are ordinarily procurable, fowls and mutton; so our friend’s food is a variation of grapes, melons, treacle, beans, soup, mutton. But to “eat bread” is no hyperbole here for to breakfast, dine, or sup; the basis of a meal is bread, large sheets of which, resembling thick moist brown paper, are spread, and serve as table-cloth, as spoon—a piece is torn off and hollowed out,—as the main food.

A bell sounds, our boy goes to his class. The carpets have been swept, all articles not required have been put in niches in the wall, for tables there are not. Names are called, all turn to the east, and recite the Nicene Creed, and one of the Apostles recites an English Collect. The boy sits on the carpet, and if he has to write, holds his paper on his knees, using a reed pen, and very thick ink, which is laid on freely for the broad Syriac letters. His stone inkpot, pens, paper, New Testament, and grammar or spelling book which have been bought from the Apostles,

he keeps in a box secured by a padlock. Our boy sits quiet and attentive in class, partly from a wholesome dread of a stick which the chief Apostle of the school wields, partly because he really has learned good manners in the school. He has no fear of his Rabbis in any bad sense ; he likes them, and does not give them cause for complaint. If our boy were in the upper school as a deacon, or an "unordained deacon," as the big boys are playfully called, and were refractory, he might be "poured into prison," *videlicet*, confined for two or three hours, or even for the whole day, in a dark room used for storing wood. Sometimes it is asked : "Rabbi, do you imprison deacons in England ?" It is difficult to explain that London curates who might whisper at a clerical meeting are not often confined in a coal-cellar.

Our boy's lessons call for no special remark. Perhaps at Astronomy a boy will say, "Rabbi, do you expect me to believe that nonsense ?" Or, when some plain question in the life of Joseph (say) is asked, a most wild legend is the answer. Again, "How many children were killed at Bethlehem ?" Answer, "144,000." Or, in the English lesson a boy startles the class by uttering some hard sentence in Syro-English as "Give us a little dictation." But it is nearly midday. Again our boy comes to chapel. All are sitting. The chancel is open, and a native deacon reads, or an Apostle preaches a sermon. After this comes "break fast," or more properly dinner, a luxury which the whole school enjoys, without the necessity of paying for it—a great advantage in Syrian eyes.

In the afternoon, lessons proceed as in the morning. The little boys, partly from good impulses, partly from dislike of the stick—"Marks are sweeter than stick," they say—do not copy or "crib" very much, but when the boy grows into the hobbledehoy, or becomes a deacon or priest, the master must keep a close watch on him or he

will keep his book open, and steal from his neighbour unblushingly.

Our little boy is a little old man, his coat, a man's coat, reaching to his knees. His habits are old. He does not, lessons over, care much for games, nor does he ever walk anywhere except between his own village and his school. But he begs for paper and begins to write, perhaps his Catechism, or Astronomy, or his Scripture History.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE SISTERS

SIR, *Summer 1892.*

Have you seen or heard by newspaper, or other means, that we have had the Kurds in the plain? ¹ Usually they keep to the mountains and the Christian villages in the mountains for their mischief, or else perhaps have a rush down the mountain to carry off sheep or cows. Now they have tried further, and came to one of the villages in the Urmi Plain, close to the mountain, and robbed and plundered. So that village has now been deserted—for a time, at least. I dare say the people will go back again after a while. Yesterday, riding down to the city, we overtook some Kurds driving horses and donkeys on the road, and our horses did not like the loose horses, so began dancing. However, I managed to get mine past, so seeing Sister in a difficulty, made the servant go back to help; but some of the Kurds had most politely helped her through, offering to hold her horse. I said to Auraham, our servant, "But these are good Kurds, Auraham, and they look nice." "Yes," he said, "they are good here, but if you had met them on their mountains, they would not be good!"

¹ The Sister refers to the Kurds of the hill country on the frontier of Persia and Turkey, who are great robbers. There are also on the Plain of Urmi several villages of settled Kurds, who are peaceable enough.

August.—The sky just now is glaring, although a deep blue, but somehow it makes the eyes ache; the mountains look scorching, and the lake in the distance reminds one of boiling starch—very blue and misty.

Just in front of me is one of the pictures to be seen here everywhere—a flock of black sheep and goats, with the shepherd in his coloured rags and bright turban, whistling to them as he leads them about and draws them with the real, proper shepherd's crook. I wish you could see him; the blue and white of his loose clothes, the red and blue hanging sleeves, with dark blue and white turban, contrast so well with his dark brown skin, and this one is rather a handsome-looking man. Here one can see what our New Testament means, the discernment in dividing the sheep from the goats; it is very difficult to tell which is which.

One thing we enjoy very much and that is the fruit. It is the ordinary food of the natives, and more easily procured than anything else. Also, ice is easily to be obtained; for two or three *shâhi*—which means nearly a penny—one can obtain a lump which I believe in Oxford would cost nearly five shillings; and the big tanks of water which stand about in the streets for the people to drink from as they pass, have generally lumps of ice floating in them.

You would be interested with the odd little sights one sees here. For instance when we ride into Urmi, just as we enter the gates, there is one of the funny little shops just outside, with the owner sitting cross-legged in front, and generally two or three would-be purchasers, also squatting, making a bargain; on one side an enormous pile of melons heaped up on the ground, and on the other an equally high pile of grapes, then a pile of cucumbers, vegetable marrows, and what are called black tomatoes, a vegetable something like a marrow to look at, but rather smaller; it is eaten usually cut in slices, and fried in oil, and

we rather like it. Then, just coming in, there are red tomatoes, peaches, nectarines, and apples in great abundance; apricots are just over. You can have an enormous melon for rather less than a penny; the water melons are most beautiful to look at (dark green rind, and like a pomegranate inside), and very refreshing to eat. The musk melons are like those we get in England and very delicious. The fruit is very cheap, about 36 lbs. of grapes makes a *batman*, and is sold for about fourteen *shâhi*—equal to about fourpence-halfpenny. They will be cheaper, and in some parts they are given as food to the horses.

URMI, *October 22, 1892.*

Mr. Browne went up to the mountains some two weeks ago; we have not heard from him from Qudshanis, but he was ten days in quarantine on the frontier. The mountain roads have been very difficult for months now; between this and Mar Bhishu there is a terrible Kurd, who has actually been put in charge of the quarantine by the Turks, and he and his servants rob every one they can! One of the boys at the school came from Mar Bhishu, bringing eight *tumans* (about £2, 10s.) with him to send up provisions from the city there. The Kurd's servant took it all, but luckily he knew the man's name, got a letter from the Governor, and got his money back again. Shamasha Shlimun (Solomon), Mar Shimun's cousin, has been robbed twice this summer, once of his horse amongst other things.

Oct.-Nov. 1892.—Two new children from Gavilan are quite tinies, about six or seven, such dear little mites; one of them, though, is very poor, so we shall have to dress her. It is so pretty to see the elder girls with these little ones . . . they treat them as dolls . . . an old broom of twigs was found the other day with some rags tied on it—it was considered a very fine doll! . . .

Our girls all came back on Monday; the boys who

have been here through the summer are lamenting it. They say they like our yard best, and have been most of the time here since they came down from Sir, and of course when the school begins, the rule has to begin, "No boy in the Sisters' yard without permission from the Apostles!" They are very clever at making excuses for permission though, and a small rent or a button off will make it very necessary to come and be seen to.

Monday, Jan. 9th, 1893.—Such a busy day. S. E. Joanna made cakes covered with sugar, and marvellous other arrangements for our first treat for the children here. After *kawitra* (midday meal) Mr. Daltry came and decorated the schoolroom, actually with coloured papers the children gummed together, and most artistic banners painted on market glaze! The children's low table, covered with sheets, was spread with cakes, sweets, and fruits, and a high table with two *samovars* (urns) and all the glasses we could borrow. Some of the boys had been helping since early morning with conscious pride, others had peeped round the kitchen door to get a taste of this or that—delighted to be called in to crack walnuts, &c. Of course as good as gold. After prayers at four the guests arrived, headed by Mar Auraham and his attendant deacons; the *élite* were shown into the Infant School, which was converted into a quite smart guest-room. Then all the mountain boys—fifty-three—some grown up, trooped into the schoolroom, and like gentlemen took their places round the table, sitting with the girls as though they had been quite used to it. Mar Auraham sat at the top of the room with his attendants, and after he had said grace the boys very much enjoyed English cakes; one dish after another quickly disappeared.

We had the harmonium brought down, and Mr. Jenks played, whilst we all waited on the guests. No entertainment was needed, for the boys, specially the mountaineers,

are born acrobats, and for two hours performed one thing after another. Nothing could be more quiet or courteous than their behaviour.

Could one in England fancy seventy boys and girls in a long room, three boys acting a camel inimitably (the head a piece of stick dressed up with rag, the two boys holding on one another's backs, showing their four legs, a carpet thrown over, bells round the neck ; a tiny boy dressed up in sheep-skin was the young camel, sometimes running after them), and getting nothing beyond merriment ? At the end Mr. Edington (dressed up as Father Christmas) gave them each a present—how we longed for the boxes which are at Trebizond. I did not mention that on Tuesday S. E. Joanna and S. Martha went off to market to try and find presents, not exactly what would have satisfied English children—they found common peg-tops, which delighted them.

Tuesday, 10th.—Some of the boys came in and helped put everything straight ; they washed up all the tea-glasses without breaking one, and delivered them all back to their rightful owners. The boys can be most useful ; one nice boy from Mar Bhishu I don't know what I should do without. He sees after the sick boys in the Hakimkhana, comes to me for their medicines, keeps them and sees they take them. He says—that is Shimun—that he is not “willing from S. F. Joanna,” because she calls him “naughty boy” in English, but when I called him this, and she exclaimed, he replied, “From her I am quite willing, it only comes from her mouth and not her heart.” They never fail for an answer !

Thursday, 12th.—In the afternoon we asked all the little day scholars, making a party of forty ; a few boys came to amuse the children, and many fathers and mothers came, and in one way it was strikingly like an English treat. We found from last Monday's experience that cake was not sufficient for these children, so we first gave them basins of

jam and curds with their own bread before they began on cake and sweets. It was delightful to see how the little things enjoyed everything; they went home about seven each with a tiny present given once more by Father Christmas.

Sunday, Jan. 15th.—One service—retired into the Hakimkhana with peace. It is an immense comfort; one wonders how we ever managed last year, the children when sick messing about and being given all sorts of things to eat; this they never dare do up there. It is such a pretty bright room, or rather two, for it has a division wall. We very much want pictures for the walls. We have a wooden bedstead in each, and there is room for two or three on the floor in each, for only those who are really sick go into the beds, and then they find them very comfortable. We have had blue tiles put in the window seat and *kawi* (recesses), and red native curtains for the windows, and bright-coloured quilts on beds. We find it answers very well to use the girls to wait on them; they delight in doing it and do it well, and keep the room most clean and neat. A little girl of eleven or twelve will do wonders up there. Then if they are too sick to be left at night, the woman sleeps with them.

Three girls in the Infirmary really ill, one with acute bronchitis, another dysentery, another with inflammation, but they are so good and patient, and the brightest little mortal of eleven is their nurse, so we get on well; and they are so comfortable there.

Lots of others with coughs; but I think our cough mixture is too nice. I must invent another. Dispensing is no small part of my work now. Several boys are ill, but not bad enough to do more than make up their medicines. I am glad, for we have *almost* sufficient to do nowadays. We have three new girls; two, alas! left to be married.

February, 11th.—We have had much sickness this year, I think, because we have had a Hakimkhana (hospital);

however, it is the greatest boon. Now I am longing to have a dispensary. I spend most of my time, I may say, in dispensing. There are some of the boys always ill; then people from outside are always wanting medicine

The mountain boys generally appear only half-clad, and when the cold weather began we felt great pity for them. Some of them are very delicate, and we have found the "fisherman's" shape of knitted woollen vests to be a grand invention for them; our wool is of all colours, but that does not matter, for the more colours the boys wear the better they like it. Anything that is English is supposed to be "very grand" by them. A little while ago in furnishing our infirmary we could get nothing in the way of under blankets for our beds, so we cut up and used some of a store of housemaids' scrubbing flannel which had been sent out to us. (With mud floors scrubbing flannel is not much wanted here.) One of our little mountain children was a patient there the other day, and evidently thought her surroundings very "jins" (quite the right thing). After a day or two, when she was better, she was told she might go down for the Catechism lesson. Sister K. Mildred had just started her lesson when a little figure crept in; this underblanket was pinned round the mountaineer dress like an old-fashioned English shawl, the red fez appearing at the top.

I spend all my spare time in translating things for the children. It is good practice.

I have not been to the villages much lately, for all the horses are at Tabriz, but until they were wanted for this journey I went a good deal. . . .

I fear we are considered very ungrateful for not acknowledging things kind people have sent us, some more than a year ago. The truth is no boxes have arrived. It is dreadful how they bungle. Twice boxes have been sent without

bills of lading, so they have to wait months at Trebizond. Will you kindly mention these delays to any friends you hear wonder as to whether their things have reached us.

THE SYRIAN CHRISTMAS IN URMI

By about half-past eleven on the morning of Christmas Eve (January 5th with the Westerns), Qurbana had been made in Mart Mariam, and the people could have breakfast. The day proceeded quietly until ten o'clock in the evening; then Qasha Dinkha (our Christmas guest for the second time) collected the few boys who were unable to go home for the feast, and began to keep the vigil in the Mission chapel. By half-past one they had finished reciting the psalter, and like an ignorant Western, inexperienced in long services, one of the new arrivals from England ran downstairs to bless their feast, and ask if the little ones were tired; he had just looked up the word "sleepy" in the dictionary, and had got it quite ready. But they were only taking a little fresh air before returning with an enormous MS. prayer-book to sing further Offices until half-past three. Soon after six everybody was in Mart Mariam; Qasha Oshana made Qurbana, and the Bishop preached a strongly anti-Nestorian sermon on the Incarnation with thorough Eastern energy. Everybody was pleased with a crowded church, which brought home the fact that they were "looking up." And now our part of the day's work was to begin, the heavy task of "feast blessing." The correct thing is to visit one another's houses and say, "May your feast be blessed." We came across several groups of Syrian males during the day who were thus engaged, and made them very uneasy lest we should call and find them not at home.

First of all we visited our own chief guest, Mar Auraham (the Patriarch-designate), whom we had properly provided with a tray of little sweets, and about whose coffee and

water-pipe we had given special instructions. Then we sped off to Mar Gauriel, blessed his feast, heard about his illness, and the houses of death which we must visit first of all. The novice has now to learn a lesson in the etiquette of drinks. A house where death has been must give coffee because it suggests bitterness; a grand house will also offer coffee; humbler abodes will perhaps provide tea, or araq, or a little wine. Tea and coffee must be very sweet, and of course without milk, and in little glasses. They are quietly drunk while conversation goes on, but wine and araq must be drunk with a "Your health" to the host, who will reply, "May it be pleasant to you."

In every house of mourning one says on entering "May your head be healed," instead of the usual Christmas greeting, and after the coffee is drunk and the water-pipe has been smoked all round, one rushes off to the next house. Somehow or rather by dint of hard labour this work is over before five o'clock, and only one man is forgotten, a funny old gentleman whose beard is dyed with klena.

A little rest is acceptable, to recover from the effects of excessive coffee drinking—and then follows the feast for the boys, which Mar Auraham and our other guests attend. The Friday fast is over at sunset with Evensong,¹ and the thin bread goes dipping into the bowls of meat, and all is business for some time. A few words of thanks from Mar Auraham and we adjourn to the Common Room. One boy sings a long song on the history of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and two others give a plaintive duet on the subject of the Crucifixion. Games follow, played chiefly by the mountain boys. There is the "bee," which consists of the middle one of three boys humming with his hands up to his mouth and then suddenly trying to smack his neighbour on either side on the cheek (this is the sting), at the same time

¹ If Christmas Day falls on a Friday, it is nevertheless a fast. But as Friday itself ends at the evening prayers, so also does the Friday fast.—A. J. M.

bobbing his head to avoid a smack in return. "Sacks of corn" is played by two boys who are closely locked together and are alternately the sack and the miller, and put each other over the backs of two other boys; the boy who was "miller" on one side will find himself "sack" on the other side, and will be swung over by the sometime "sack" who is now become "miller." Other boys tuck in their heads and roll round the room like balls. There is the well-known game of having a stick under one's knees to which the wrists are tied, and then feet to feet two boys will try to push each other over. Lastly comes the *camel*, made by two boys covered with a large carpet; the head is made of dusters at the end of a long stick. Slowly the camel walks round the room, now and then striking out with his head at anyone who is too close, or making a sudden rush at a timid group in the corner and punishing them soundly; then there is unusual laughter as now one and now another of the Missioners gets a drubbing, or a middle-aged visitor of some distinction is made for, and ignominiously scuttles off. But it is after ten o'clock, and so all kiss the Bishop's hand and those of the "Apostles," and say, "Push b'shaina."

The last remark of the evening has proved a poser and must be a thoroughly Eastern conception. A mountain boy when asked if he was not tired after being in chapel all last night, said, "No. Why, that was yesterday, and this is to-day." Can anyone explain? D. J.

THE FAMINE IN NOCHEA

Nochea (Kurdish word, meaning "between the mountains") is a mountainous district in Turkey in the Mattran's diocese, called Shamsdin in the Mission maps. It is here that the Mattran lives, away from any village, his monastery being within the churchyard of Mar Ishu, on the side of the mountains. The villages of Nochea, Kurdish and Christian,

are beautifully scattered in the valleys and on the hillsides, and possess some of the oldest and best of the Syrian churches, built entirely of stone, and often containing seven or eight divisions. The old name of the district was Rustaka ("black mountains") which picturesquely describes its beautiful mountains covered with dark forests. In olden days it was under the expensive protection of the Kurdish chiefs, and until quite lately some of the villages were Ashiret. In recent times the Turks have asserted their authority, and by destroying the Kurdish protection have changed their powerful neighbours into oppressive robbers.

Two things specially strike the Englishman in the life of these loyal sons of the Church who are holding up the Cross under great difficulties, and who now appeal to the sympathy of brother Christians with a claim which is hard to be resisted when it is understood—their twofold oppression, and their devoted piety.

Every year the Turkish officials with a small band of soldiers visit the country after harvest to claim their taxes; it will be easily understood that on the Eastern principle of taxation the agents are able to collect far more than their due. In the train of the tax-gatherers and soldiers is a group of Kurdish chiefs and Jews who are ready to buy the property of the people at extravagant prices if there be a lack of ready money. On one occasion the Bishop of Tis had in this way to give a Kurd fifty-two pounds of butter for the privilege of borrowing one *lira* (Turkish pound). A refusal to pay exorbitant taxes only results in the destruction of the village and the carrying off of the cattle. For eleven months in the year the people have only the memory of past exactions and the prospect of the next visit. The Kurds are, unfortunately, almost always with them, and they content themselves generally with asking for gifts, while the poorer ones beg; experience has taught the Syrians not to refuse; occasionally they steal and indulge

in open robbery, but in most cases the Christians buy peace by satisfying the demands of their neighbours. On one occasion the Turkish soldiers, who were on the hills, living at the expense of the people while they protected them, watched the sack of a village by the Kurds, and only when the enemy had retired made a silly show of attempting to pursue them; if by any chance the government is obliged to interfere, the surrender to them by the Kurds of half the booty will end the matter. When the nomadic Kurds pass to the Mosul district for the winter, and again when they are returning in the spring for pasturage, there is always robbery and danger of something worse.

There is perhaps no Syrian district where simple piety and loyal devotion to the Church of their fathers is more beautifully seen than in Nochea. Some years ago several villagers ran over the border to Persia, when persecution had made it impossible for them to obtain a living in their homes; but within a few years sickness and other misfortunes spoke to them as a message from God in judgment for deserting the churches of their forefathers and the shrines of their saints, and they returned, prepared to suffer the annual destruction of their labours rather than leave the houses of God in the hands of the heathen. Seven times Mr. Neesan's father left his village and came to Persia, only settling here when his church had been destroyed. If to-day the people are asked why they do not desert a country which is full of trouble and oppression, they say that they cannot leave their churches. This devotion is not merely a superstitious feeling; they use the houses of God, for the protection of which they suffer. The long morning prayers, which are often over before daybreak, are well attended, and the people remember that David said, "In the evening and morning, and at noonday will I pray, and that instantly." During the long Advent and Lenten fasts the people do not eat till after evensong, except the

aged and weakly and the children, who have permission from the Matran to eat after midday prayers. Qasha Dinkha says that in the last famine very few people broke their fast, and many would die sooner than do so.

The picture is not complete without a glance at the Matran's house. It is an ideal home of the People's Father in such a country. Here he has a school for the deacons of his diocese, who are taught by him with the aid of his father and uncle; their studies are in Old Syriac, and especially in liturgical work. The Matran might very well be a rich man did not the demands of the Kurds and the poverty of his people, appealing to his own great liberality, exhaust his stores. He keeps open house for travellers of every sort, and always has a little present for his own people, made from the wool of his sheep. He is ably assisted in his diocesan work by Qasha Dinkha. The people of Nochea employ themselves with their cattle; they grow a particularly good tobacco, and they have small but beautiful fields cultivated for their own use. They are a simple people, who know nothing of begging tours in Europe and America, and who are not in receipt of permanent aid from the various missions; their great anxiety is to collect enough for taxes, to satisfy Kurdish demands, and to keep themselves through the winter.

It has been said that the people will not desert their homes while the churches of the land remain. One thing has tempted them; when the Matran took refuge with us last winter they found that they could not live without him, and in the early spring they deserted their homes and attempted to follow their best friend; they were stopped on the border by the Turkish officials and kept there. When they were permitted to return to their homes the Matran was once more among them, but it was too late to sow seed, and all the summer they have been shut up by quarantine regulations, unable to sell their tobacco or buy food. All that

they possess will by this time have been sold at a great sacrifice to satisfy the demands of the Turkish government; a refusal to pay exorbitant taxes only results in the destruction of the village and the carrying off of the cattle. Just lately the Kurdish chief who placed the Matran's life in danger last year, the same who in the great Kurdish struggle of 1881 changed sides and fought against his father when the Persians were becoming masters of the situation, has been called to Constantinople to answer the charges laid against him, taking with him eight thousand pounds, while he spent forty mules' loads of treasures in Van in a vain attempt to escape from his journey. It is generally expected that he will be reinstated.

The famine district consists of about eight villages, and there are a thousand people who need to be kept alive through the winter, and some of whom are already living upon herbs.

D. J.

URMI, PERSIA, *January 7, 1893.*

I have been busy with the Famine Fund and some mountain village schools, for Qasha Dinkha, the Matran's Archdeacon, has just come down, and has given me his report of what has been done already for the people in Shamsdin.

I had given him some weeks ago 1000 qrans, *i.e.* between £25 and £30, as a first instalment for distribution. I had also given to him an account book; I did not, however, think that he would be able to give me so clear and exact an account as he did. His intention was to buy corn and have it carried up by Kurds from Tergawar, in Persia, to Shamsdin (Nochea), but he found that so much famine money would be expended in the carriage of the corn that he gave up this idea. For each load of corn he had to pay 20 qrs., and the Kurds wanted 21 qrs. for the carriage of each load; so, seeing that more than half the money would go in horse-hire, he bought only a small quantity and left

it in Tergawar, probably in his own house: he then went to the Matran's in Nochea and sent some men down, each man to bring up a small quantity for his own house. From the Matran's house he and the Matran visited some of the villages and distributed small sums of money, the amount being regulated according to the circumstances and size of each family. With this money the recipients went to the plain of Gawar and bought food (maize), for which they paid 12 grans a load. Of course wheat would have been nicer to eat, as I know from experience, but they were thus able to get much more food, five loads of maize costing only the same as three of wheat.

For the first instalment from the fund I have now received Q. Dinkha's report. All the villages requiring help have been reached except two. I have now given about £45 more as a second instalment, and to help also those two villages which were not helped from the first instalment. I may here mention that the Matran has distributed nearly the whole of his own wheat while he was waiting for our help which we were sending by Q. Dinkha.

Q. Dinkha gave me his account. I found he had ruled out the book I gave him, then he had put down everything in order—such and such a village, the names of the inhabitants, so many in family, so much money given. Now came the business of taking the account. In some few cases the accounts agreed from the first; in others—and they were the more numerous—this kind of thing happened: "So many souls," said the Qasha, "so many grans." "No," said I; "I make it three people more and five grans less," or "five people less and ten grans more." Then I read out my list, and it agreed with his; then I went through his additions and corrected them. I am telling you this to show you how extremely honestly he has done his work. His additions were, in most cases, wrong, yet for all this he did not try to alter them to suit



ORAMAR

his money but gave them up to me, simply saying, "Here is my account; I cannot make it come out and balance properly, but I think I have put down everything." The mistakes were only in the additions, for when I added them up correctly I brought out the account perfectly balanced with the exception of one qran ($6\frac{1}{2}d.$).

The Qasha was much pleased to find his account so nearly correct. He was just a little disappointed about this unaccounted-for one qran, and said to me, "The qran has gone; I suppose I gave it away to someone with some other money, and put down one qran short by mistake. GOD knows I have not taken it." I said, "I am perfectly certain, Rabbi, that you have not, be it far from you to have done any such thing; I am surprised in paying away so much money to so many people you should so nearly be able to account for your money."

A. R. E.

CHAPTER IV

MISSION DIFFICULTIES

IN the house school at Urmi the term has been an anxious one. We were obliged at last to expel a teacher from the yard because of his drunkenness. And one of the old scholars, who had just won his position as a teacher, and was beginning to be of great help to his widowed mother, gave way to temptation, and carried on during several weeks an elaborate system of large thefts. After much detective work he was discovered, and by the courtesy of his village master he was made to restore the property ; of course we were obliged to expel him.

Many minor cases of thefts and lying occurred, and, as was natural, there were the usual little troubles of discipline. It is such hard work to cane one of these little boys with whom one is in the habit of playing, when he says most meekly, and in such a nice manner, "I will take any punishment from you, Rabbi." One boy was expelled for frequent lying, a punishment which seemed excessive to the Syrians: two serious cases of gambling occurred, and the boys, who were among the biggest in the school, had to be locked up and publicly reprimanded.

We feel that quite apart from selfish considerations a strict standard of morality must be maintained in our yards, both for the sake of the schools, and that the Syrians may learn not to divorce morality from religion.

Later in the term Shamasha Ishai (Jesse), the brother

of Mar Shimun, and a company of friends paid us a business visit. It was a very expensive visit, as everybody had to receive a present, and it was a great tax upon our time. The visit has been very useful in consolidating friendship. While he was with us the school "broke up." Mr. Daltry was busy until the last moment with examination marks. We all squeezed into one of the big classrooms, with a "high table" for the guests and the dons: prizes were distributed; complimentary speeches were exchanged. The great speech of the evening was from Dr. Oshana, a Syrian who has studied medicine in Scotland, whose heart burns with national feeling, and whose head is remarkably cool and clear; instead of flattering the English, he told the boys the importance of their own share in building up their Church and nation: they must not expect this Mission to produce results without the hearty moral co-operation of the Syrians.

SYRIAC LETTERS

The letters which we print below show great appreciation of a copy of the Dean of Canterbury's Syriac Lexicon which has been received at Urmi by our Mission. The Dean some time ago sent his Lexicon to the Dominicans in exchange for their excellent edition of the Peschitta or early Syriac version of the Bible, and at an earlier date gave another copy of as much of the book as had then appeared, to the Americans, in return for an important manuscript which they caused to be copied for him. Now the Delegates of the Oxford University Press have taken the circumstances of the Mission into consideration, and have generously allowed the Dean to purchase a copy of the work half-price.

These letters are magnificent specimens of writing,

the superscription being in red, the rest in Indian ink, in letters one-tenth of an inch thick, half to three-quarters of an inch high.

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Jah
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To the excellent and expert Doctor, the scribe of scribes, who has made the light of his learning to shine in the East and in the West, pious (man) of GOD, Dean of Canterbury, may honour and praise for his labours and the preservation of his life be multiplied for ever.

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After asking of your peace and requesting your prayers ; there is assured confidence that you are guarded by divine providence from all dangers hidden or open, unto the praise of His holy name, and especially unto the employment of that most profitable talent which you have laid on the table of the Church, to the advantage of her sons and to the raising up of your excellent memorial. There was great thanksgiving in the house of the Mission for the honoured apostles and for the teachers and taught together at the arrival within it of the firstfruits of your labour, for it will be a fount of learning for all students and disciples of Syriac, and also for a remembrance of your Holiness in our prayers and for the glory of the Lord of Hosts.

Sealed with great thanksgiving and with request for your prayers for the Apostolic Palace.

Also for the meanness of your servant and that of the Mission, Oshana Saru, by divine grace Priest and Archdeacon of the Patriarchal Cell in Qudshanis.

4th of Eastern December

••• 1893 •••

••• in Dawar •••

Seal

• •
Jah
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To the holy Father of Fathers and chief of Pastors, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Metropolitan of All England, may honour, health and length of temporal life to his Blessedness be multiplied.

• • Amen • •

After asking your prayers and your blessings ; it is evident that the grace cannot be repaid which your Holiness has done and is doing, in taking care for the raising up of the ancient Church of the Syrians of the East, which is blessed among her enemies ; and her lamp was nigh to be quenched and to fall from its lampstand, and to-day through the means of the Mission it buds day by day and receives light. Your care again does not neglect to give desired and strengthening (aids) as the book of Lexicon which has been presented, and which will be for the instruction of scribes and disciples, and for the strengthening of the Press, and for a good remembrance of your Holiness in prayers for blessing, and for the glory of the Almighty Lord of Hosts.

Signed, with many thanksgivings. Bless O my LORD. May your prayers and your blessings rain upon the Mission and on the Church wherein it labours. Also upon your servant and that of the Mission, Oshana Saru, by grace Priest and Archdeacon of the Patriarchal Cell

• • in Dawar • •

Dec. 5,
• • 1893 • •

AN EPISCOPAL DINNER PARTY

Soon after the arrival of the last batch of missionaries, the members of the staff received a general invitation to dinner from the Bishop of the diocese. At first we were asked by word of mouth, through Mr. Browne, who was then spending a short time at Urmi; but on the morning of the event we received the following formal document:

BIDDING

To the Reverend Apostles, Peace

You will kindly give yourselves the trouble of being with us to-night. We will eat together supper in Persian fashion, and will drink a little wine to the health of the Reverend Mr. Browne. Let not one of your company be absent; even your cat leave not behind. You will make us glad.—Your lover,

YAKU GAURIEL, *Bishop.*

Perhaps I ought to explain that Yaku (James) is the Bishop's baptismal name, Gauriel (Gabriel) his hereditary name as Bishop of Urmi, assumed on accession to the See.

Shortly before 7 P.M. we sallied forth, duly habited in cap and gown (except the cat, who preferred to remain at home), accompanied by two servants carrying large paper lanterns of the ordinary Japanese type, but quite grotesquely huge. We soon reached the Episcopal residence (perhaps it would be a little misleading to call it a palace!), and were met at the door by several deacons who attend our school, and were called by the Bishop to do honour to his feast by acting as servants. They took off our shoes on reaching the entrance of the guest-room, an apartment of considerable size, where the rest of the company were assembled, and we were received by Mar Gauriel with a hearty *Shlama lochon* ("Peace be with you"), to

which we duly answered, *B'shaina Aboona* ("In peace, little Father")—the proper mode of addressing one's bishop! Then there was much handshaking and exchanging of peace with the dozen guests who were invited to meet us, whilst we made our way discreetly to the other end of the room. I say *discreetly*, because as the feast was set out on the floor, extending nearly the whole length of the room, it was necessary to move warily to avoid treading on the viands. The Bishop took his place as host at the head of the "table," placing us on either side of him, squatting or kneeling of course, upon the floor. The Bishop then took off his fez, a sign that grace was about to be said, and as all the guests except ourselves were covered—some wearing the tall black Persian hat which the Shah has made a familiar object of our native shores, others the fez or the turban, or the two combined—they all followed his example. Bending forward, the Bishop blesses the food; all present make the sign of the Cross, the LORD'S Prayer is said, and almost before the *Amen* has been uttered, the Bishop, replacing his fez, bows to his guests, and he tells us that our presence purifies his house, and that his house and all it contains is ours. He then presses upon us a liqueur glass of *arak*, the native spirit, and taking a little himself, he drinks our health, or rather our love, as the Syrian phrase *Habochon* means. We rejoin, *Haniloch* ("May it be pleasant to you"). And with such agreeable speeches we settle down to the serious work of the evening.

It may not seem a very serious thing to eat a dinner, but I would ask any reckless critics who are tempted to raise the question whether "serious" is a legitimate adjective in this connection to do two things before pronouncing an opinion—*first*, to take their next meal on the floor, and, *secondly*, to arrange to eat (without, of course, knives and forks) the same kind of viands one has set before one out here! These are almost as difficult to describe as to

digest. In front of each person there is a large oval sheet of bread, roughly, about a foot and a half by a foot in dimension, very much like a limp sheet of coarse brown paper and scarcely thicker. Upon this is placed a basin of meat (generally unutterably tough) in gravy, and by it another bowl of boiled rice, with which all kinds of curious seeds are mixed. Innumerable little plates or saucers fill up all available space upon the table-cloth, containing pickles, such as mixtures of cabbage, capsicums, sliced onions, and celery in vinegar, or a gruesome-looking compound which does duty for cheese, and other unknown quantities. You dip from the bowls of meat with a wooden spoon, generally about as big as a tablespoon, or if you are very orthodox you gaily tear off pieces of your bread and skilfully help yourself with your fingers to bits of meat by means of them, tearing off a fresh morsel of bread for each mouthful. Several courses of meat follow one another, including the inevitable chicken, or "little cock," as the Syrians generally call it. The Bishop himself, of course, eats none of these carnal dainties, as flesh in all forms is denied him. He has a considerable quantity of omelette, boiled eggs, spinach, onions, sour cabbage, potatoes, and perhaps other vegetables put before him in a large bowl. These are all very good, and are provided also in other dishes, separately, for the guests; but the Bishop, who is the soul of hospitality, presses those sitting near him to dip into his dish. The wine of the country, the pure juice of the grape, red and white, is passed freely, but partaken of frugally, and by none more frugally than by the Bishop.

He is of a cheery disposition, and fond of a good story. He told us with much animation a reminiscence of his visit to England several years ago. Dr. Tait was Archbishop of Canterbury, and made him his guest at Lambeth. During dinner a lobster salad was handed round. The Bishop took some lettuce and mayonnaise, and in so doing revealed the red shell of a fine lobster, crouching beneath, which he had not

at first seen. When he caught sight of it he started back, and motioned the footman to take it away. The Archbishop turned to him and said, "Eat some of the lobster, Bishop; it is fish, and very good." To which he answered, "No, your Grace; it is not fish, and it is very bad." Crustacea are not included by Syrians under the term "fish," even for culinary purposes, and a crab or lobster, moreover, is an unclean creature, which would not be eaten even by a Syrian layman!

Excellent fruit is handed round towards the end of the meal, including melons, grapes, quinces, apples, and pears. Then a small glass of sweet, but very good coffee, after which grace is said, and long pipes are produced. Presently a waterpipe, somewhat of the construction of the Turkish *nargileh*, is produced, and with much ceremony is handed round, strictly in order of precedence, to all guests in turn. Just before nine o'clock all guests ceremoniously, but hastily, decamp, for without an order from the Governor it is not lawful to be out in the city after nine. As it is, we hear the clock of the Americans strike the hour before we reach our door, and are suspiciously eyed by some disreputable-looking villains, who turn out to be the night guard. The air of eminent respectability, however, imparted by our caps and gowns, and the general sobriety of our appearance, seemed to reassure these worthy representatives of the Shah, and they did not put us into the city gaol, as I believe they might have done (and stranger things do happen in Persia), but graciously allowed us to reach the Mission House unmolested. F. F. I.

SIPERGHAN

Ecclesiastically Siperghan may be described as a cathedral city; to outward view it is a collection of mud cottages, more or less continuous, with here and there a better house standing in its own "grounds." Our school stands towards the upper end of the "High Street";

farther on is the episcopal "palace," and the street terminates in the village ash-heap, the result of many years' emptyings of *tanuras*. The ash-heap is not to be despised; it will be a fine *kokken-modding* for some geologist of the future; and at present it affords a convenient platform from which to see over the house-roofs into the surrounding country, and very lovely the view is—whether in summer, when the light green of the vineyards contrasts with the blue of the lake beyond, and that again with the brown hills which hide Tabriz, or in winter, when the basin formed by the lake and plain are ringed in with white. For the high border mountains to the west receive their crown of snow in early autumn; and then the hills across the lake appear like a white cloud against the clear blue sky, and at last by mid-winter the circle of white is completed. At sunset the colours are wonderful, and I have seen the hill near Siperghan glow like dolomite, while all the plain was in shadow. Beyond the vineyards a long stretch of salt flat reaches to the lake, productive of little but salt, coarse grass, and—in the spring—an interesting collection of eggs. Oh, for a few weeks' holiday after Easter, with nothing to do but birds'-nesting! there are hoopoes building in the mud walls—one hears them calling to one another with their clear double or treble note, alternating with the cuckoo. In the marshy ground ducks, and gulls, and quails, and plovers, and curlews; all manner of larks on the flat nearer the city, and in the orchards, crows, and magpies, and starlings in any quantity, and—prettiest of all—the "bulbul" of the poets, which lays its tiny white eggs in a wonderfully woven hanging nest. Higher up, near Sîr, there are partridges and doves of several varieties. Flamingoes build on the islands in the lake—so they say. The eagles and falcons, which one sees occasionally hovering overhead, must have their homes in the border mountains. The storks have gone southward for

the winter, but in the summer they are strutting about in every bit of marshy land. The descendants of Aristophanes' "marshy children of the springs" probably migrated to Urmi; for in May and June there is nothing else but their croaking. There is a spot near Siperghan where their noise is almost literally deafening.

The snow is very lovely on the hill-tops; it is less pleasing when there has been a heavy fall in the village itself. Then everyone is quickly hard at work, shovelling the snow off the roofs with large wooden spades, for if left on there would very soon be a leakage through the flat mud roofs. So it is flung into the streets, and there it lies melting for many days, until the ways are unpleasant beyond words. Mud may be reckoned one of the inconveniences of the country, and the mud at Siperghan seems to be worse than the mud elsewhere. Our school lies flush with the road, and as it is impossible to prevent the snow being piled against our walls, owing to the narrowness of the streets, the mud substructure suffers—this is the disadvantage of a corner house. The advantage is that we are well in the world. Most of the discussions go on, apparently, at my corner, and the clatter of voices on a fine summer evening brings back home recollections of Saturday night in a Potteries' town. For not seldom the discussions wax loud and long. When a Siperghan woman becomes really excited—say, upon the price of onions, or on the thesis, "Why did you let your buffalo calf stray into my yard?"—she can talk Syriac with a fluency which the one-year student envies, as he vainly tries to say "bikhshakha wakhu," without dropping any of the aspirates. It was only the other day that a lady on the next roof was carrying on an argument with another lady some roofs off with a volubility which made teaching impossible. I sent the servant to her with a polite message to the effect that, if she would kindly allow the argument to lapse for half an hour,

I should finish my lesson in that time, and should then be happy to hear the discussion continued.

We have occasional festivities in our village: there is the feast of Mar Gîwergis (the first Monday in November) and of Mar Tuma (July 15). Mar Gîwergis (St. George) is the patron saint of Siperghan, and most of the churches near are dedicated to him. Tradition says that he once resided on a hill between Siperghan and the city. On the day of Mar Tuma (St. Thomas) most of the population—Mussulmans as well as Christians—flock down to the edge of the lake, and not a few bathe. St. Thomas is said to have floated across the lake on his staff while journeying towards India, hence the desire to enter its water on the saint's festival.

But we are most *en fête* at the time of a wedding. It was my good fortune to witness a double marriage soon after coming here. The festivities lasted four days, by the end of which time the band, without which no wedding is complete, became a trifle wearisome. The band consists of a very loud drum and a very shrill pipe, and the repertoire of Syrian music set for drum and pipe would appear to be extremely limited. I do not know what fee the performers get, but they certainly earn it: they play early in the morning, and late at night; they play at the *tamasha* and at the carrying of the viands; they play at the bride's procession, and at the bridegroom's procession. When these *arcades ambo* first attracted my attention they were escorting a couple of trays heaped up with raw meat and rice, which were being taken to the brides' houses to supply the wants of the guests there; for apparently the bridegrooms' family supplied everything necessary for the feast. Then came the *tamasha*, or "show." The boys were anxious that, as a stranger, I should see all there was to be seen; so I climbed on to somebody's roof,

and was kindly provided with a chair. 'The "show" was a man dancing somewhat tamely on a tight-rope, while a buffoon or "jack-pudding" played practical jokes below. The scene was brightened by the women, grouped on the roofs and in the courtyard below, in their red or white veils (covering the hair and mouth), their velvet skirts, and chains, and bracelets; occasionally some of them indulged in a sort of slow dance, joining hands and stepping round in a circle to the sound of the pipe.

Next day the excitement was even greater. Soon after midday one of the brides came out of her parents' house (where, as a sign of farewell, she had walked seven times round the family oven), and was lifted on to her horse, her shoe being first passed three times round the horse's head for "good luck." She was closely veiled from head to foot—the shawl which covered her head and back resting on a crown—of what material I cannot say. She was led along the road with a crowd of women round her; but the procession soon came to a halt, and a small child was lifted on to her knees, to whom she gave a small present. The procession advanced a little farther and then stopped again, as the godmother of the bride brought a pan of burning incense, and censed her as she sat on the horse.

Meanwhile the bridegroom had taken up his position on a neighbouring roof, with some dozen male friends standing round, and over his head a stick surmounted by a large bunch of apples and pomegranates. Presently a young man came along the street bearing a bundle and a live chicken. The bundle—after a lengthy haggling as to the amount of presents to be given to the bearer—was thrown up on to the roof, and, being opened, displayed a new suit of clothes; into these the bridegroom, having divested himself of his old suit, proceeded to get, and stood forth "sqila," newly arrayed. Then, taking from the head of his godfather-groomsman one of the apples that

had hung over his head, he kissed it, crossed himself with it, and flung it in the direction of his bride—thus reversing the statement, “*me malo Galatea petit.*” This he repeated thrice, taking a drink of wine between each throw, possibly to strengthen his arm. One apple—I trust through misadventure—hit the lady on the horse. This ceremony ended, the veiled bride was led away to a friend’s house, it being contrary to etiquette for her to sleep in her parents’ house on the last night of her unmarried life, and the other bride appeared, and became in her turn the target for these nuptial missiles.

At night I was invited to the feast in the bridegroom’s house. There were some seventy men seated on the floor round two sides of the large “*baita*”—the single room which is practically the Syrian’s house. The Bishop occupied the post of honour. People ate, and drank, and talked freely but decorously ; there was even the music of fiddle and mandoline—both primitive in structure and thin in tone. The room was but dimly lighted with three or four little lamps—like catacomb lamps—which diffused their radiance from cotton wicks soaked in castor-oil. When the bowls of stew and ovals of pancaky bread had been partaken of and removed, the bridegrooms—brothers—came in with the pipe and drum, shook hands with all the company, and received their congratulations in the form of “*hawit brikha*”—may you be blessed ! Towards the close of the feast, the guests make contributions in money, which sometimes amount to a considerable sum : it defrays the cost of the wedding, and also the cost of the bride—(the price of the latter varying from ten *tomans* to an ox, a gun, and ten head of sheep)—with a little something over to start housekeeping on.

Next morning the actual marriage ceremony took place in church.

Again the brides were completely hidden by shawls, in

a manner more protective than becoming: with their god-mother-bridesmaids by their side, they stood for the greater part of the service at the back of the church, only coming up to the side of their husbands-to-be for the final blessing—a long prayer said over the heads, not only of bridegroom and bride, but also of the accompanying godfather and god-mother. The ritual was curious and varied. The brides' rings were put into a bowl of wine, into which a little sacred earth was sprinkled, and the whole "signed" with a wooden cross; the rings were then placed by the Deacon on the brides' fingers; the wine was drunk by the bridegrooms and brides, after their foreheads had been "signed" with it by the Priest. A triple-twisted thread of white, blue, and red, was laid on the head of each. Handkerchiefs were brought in laid on bread; the former the Priest tied cross-ways round the bridegrooms' necks, in which fashion they wear them the rest of the day; the latter was blessed and eaten by friends present.

The ceremony ended, I rode back to Urmi, feeling that, in Siperghan at any rate, a wedding is no light undertaking.

THE PRINTING PRESS

The Mission press serves a double purpose. It is by degrees supplying the church books, which are sadly decreased in number and are often being sold out of the country, and it provides books for our schools. We hope that ultimately it may send out popular sermons, and the like, for village distribution. At present the press has issued the complete Takhsa, the marriage service, a table of church lessons, a parish register, and the book of the Psalms. We have to-day finished the Surgada, or complete calendar of festival and fast, which will last until the year 2489. In a few weeks we hope to complete the Q'dham-u-Wathar, a great undertaking, which has had many ups and

downs of fortunes. We are then completely ready to print in full the church lessons from the Old and New Testament, in large black and red type ; and we hope to produce a great work in it, which shall make our press highly respected. For further particulars of these books the cover of the quarterly paper may be consulted. Of school books we have printed grammars of the written and spoken language, sundry spelling books, a large and a small catechism, a short Church history, the book of Genesis in the written language, with a few references, and just lately an elementary arithmetic sheet for the use of village schools. We are now printing a large arithmetic book for the high schools, with examples. Native teachers find it very difficult to invent sums. One of the clergy used to take walks with a Syrian to learn the language. All that he could invent in the way of sentences was "I see five black sheep, and two of them are white." The difficulty is increased when sums are required, which have to work out nicely. We have schemes enough in our heads to occupy the press for many years. The last development is to work two books together, one for churches and one for schools. There are several advantages in this plan. It enables us to be continually putting out books ; it prevents either class of work from being neglected ; and it saves time.

Of course this slightly increases expense, but I should like to emphasise the enormous importance of the work. We must reach the people through print. English churchmen, who are naturally well versed in the history of the printing press, know this point well as a feature of our own religious history. The Presbyterian mission is continually pouring forth matter. The Roman mission supplies books beautifully got up in Leipsic and Paris.

Meanwhile Qasha Oshana of Tkhuma, our learned literary authority, is writing for one of the clergy a most learned copy of the Khudhra, 'after a careful collation of

manuscripts, and into it, in the shape of notes and prefaces, he is putting a large quantity of his vast miscellaneous knowledge, the stores of a lifetime spent in intelligent study. It is hoped that the book, which is a labour of loving service on his part, will prove a monumental work of reference after he has passed away from us.

Our press is a poor thing ; it is wonderful what the three printers do with it. I should like to say a good word for them. They are capital workers, and very steady. I find them most pleasant to get on with, and I see a great deal of them, as they are always running up to me with proof sheets for correction, and I fancy sometimes that they must think me an awful bore, while I am sure they must find my writing of the arithmetic a trial to the flesh.

They have one little room in which they work, and another small room for casting type. We sometimes exchange courtesies with the other missions, and the Presbyterians have very kindly lent us small type for the Surgada. Last year we were able to oblige the Roman mission, by allowing their type to be cut on our premises, and by giving a little help to them in setting up their press. What we need immediately is enough money to cast small Syrian type, and also type for Persian and Turkish printing. We shall never teach these languages properly until we print our own grammars.

We have also a bookbinder, who has a large room in the house occupied by Mr. Neesan, and the bound books are stored in a room which leads off from my study bedroom. His work is not very satisfactory, and we often complain of his bad binding.

The work of the church lessons of which I have spoken has revealed a delightful story. In one mountain copy instead of "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil," there is written "Cyril of Alexandria did me much evil."

D. J.

SÎR IN SUMMER

July 15th, 1894.—This last week has been rather exciting in the city. It has been the week of the Mussulmans' "Passion Play," and the people go in procession about the streets two or three days, beating their breasts, and on the great day they cut themselves about with knives. Sister — and Sister M. came up last Monday to avoid the excitement, &c., and Mr. Jenks and Mr. Daltry stayed down in case they might be wanted, but they came up last night, so now we are all up here. We have once more been robbed!

Two or three nights ago we were sitting on the balcony when we heard a hue and cry, and found out that somebody had run off with one of the clergy's tents. At least that was the first story; the next and the true one was, that Mr. J.'s tent had been robbed of every scrap of bedding and a box of clothes. Mr. E.'s tent, had, I believe, only the carpet taken from it; in doing which the thieves pulled the whole tent down. You must know that the clergy's encampment, which includes their tents, Mr. H.'s and one for the few boys they have up here, is about three minutes' walk up the mountain at the back of this house; the clergy have their meals in a room in the house, and it was while they were here for supper that the thieves visited the tents. Of course it was not prudent to have left nobody up there except the boys, and the night was so dark, that it was favourable for thieves. Poor Mr. J. has hardly a garment to his back, for the thieves took nearly all his clothes in the last robbery. He rode down to the city the next day, and saw some official (there is no governor just now), who said "You ought not to live so far away from the village" (we are just above Sîr), but, as Mr. J. pointed out to them, we were just as much robbed in the city. Mr. J. was asked

what he wanted, and he demanded that four of the principal men of a Mussulman village just below Sîr, and one that we have little doubt the thieves came from, should be sent to the city and examined, and getting nothing out of them, Mr. J. demanded the value of the stolen goods from the village. This perhaps will sound a little unfair, but it is the best way of bringing thieves out. You see the probability is that the village knows all about the robbery. Several things have been got back. A herdsman is taking his flock different ways every day and has already picked up a bottle of quinine, the box containing the clothes, and a valuable writing case, all of which were left behind in different places. . . . You may be interested to hear that our thermometer (just received from England) registered 124° in the sun at about 2.30 P.M., and 92° in the shade just after. . . .

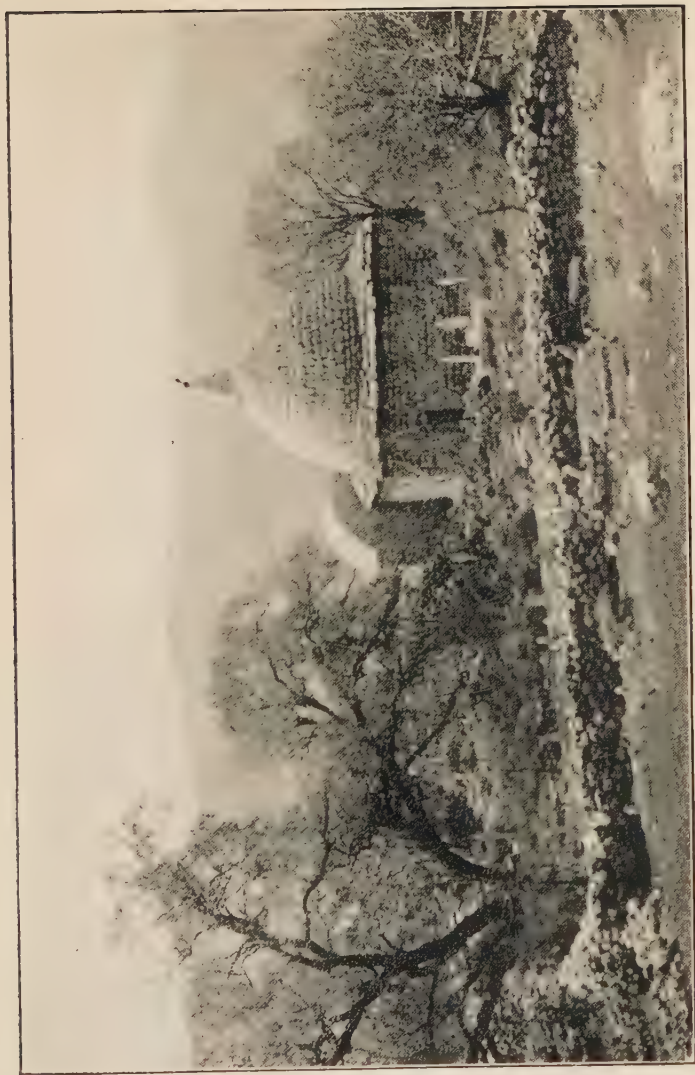
VILLAGE VISITS AND VILLAGE SCHOOLS

URMI, PERSIA, *September 22nd, 1894.*

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,—I have somewhat delayed sending your Grace the yearly report of the Sisters' share in the work here, partly that I might tell you of a few days' visit Sister Ellen Joanna and I, accompanied by Mr. Neesan, paid to the villages in the Valley of Tergawar. We have several children reading with us from Mawana, the principal village, and it seemed well we should make ourselves known to their parents. We were most hospitably received by one of the chief men of the village, and from there visited the villages round. It is a most beautifully situated spot, looking down the narrow valley with the Turkish mountains on one side, which then were well covered with snow in parts, with the corn, some standing, some already reaped in the valley. It is wonderfully fertile, scarcely an avail-

able spot left uncultivated, the people so full of life and business, a striking contrast to their more quiet Urmi neighbours. Notwithstanding the perpetual raids of the Kurds on their village, they seem in a singular way to have been enabled to rise above it. The room we were in was hung with guns which the Government provides the principal men with to fight against the Kurds. When we were there, some fifty Turkish families were camping outside the village in the full blaze of the sun in the day, and the cold of the night, with only one tent amongst them, having fled from Turkey to escape the taxation, and these were the very people who last year had been the cause of driving some Syrian families from a village nearer the border into Mawana, and only too thankful to be employed by them for harvesting now. However, a few days after the Turkish soldiers came down and drove them back, not before they (the soldiers) demanded bread for about sixty from the Mawana people, which they gave quite cheerfully, feeling it was better than the chance of having their sheep stolen. We also stayed at the village of Qasha Dinkha, the priest who is now on his road to Qudshanis to be ordained bishop for the Syrian Church in India. From there Mr. Neesan went to a village some little distance off (our horses having got loose the night before, and being rather disabled by fighting, we were obliged to stay in the village), but he only found one old woman there ; even the priest was reaping. I hope we may see our way to getting about these places more ; it is difficult to arrange, but I think it does good.

I think we can give your Grace a good report of the year's school work. The numbers have been larger than they have been before, and we have had to refuse many, for our room is very insufficient ; the lack of room is a real cause of anxiety. Owing to the demand for payment from the Urmi girls, we have had a large proportion of mountaineers ; but this is not, I think, to be regretted, for they have so much



CHURCH OF BAMERINI, NOW A MOSQUE

fewer chances of training and reading. The payment system is, I feel, good, though it is small, for we have had *no* children leaving during the year as heretofore, excepting two children it was thought well to receive without payment. Mr. Daltry and Mr. Jenks examined the school, and the report was good, on the most important subjects *very* good, and I think they were well satisfied that there had been considerable progress.

Our girls who were teaching the village schools during the winter months have done well, and their work is thorough. From time to time we visited them and examined the children, which helped to keep them up to the mark.

I am also glad to tell your Grace that the village work with the women has been carried on more regularly. It is not perhaps as encouraging as one might desire, for after the first novelty has worn off, they are not too anxious to gather together, but they seem always glad to see one, and I think the mere fact of coming in contact with them does good.

THE MISSION CHAPEL: URMI

This is an oblong building, lined with brick. On the south side is a large Persian window, filled with delicate wood-work arranged in kaleidoscopic circles, wheels, and rays, filled with mosaics of stained glass. From the interstices of the bricks project branches of "Hosannas," palms which were blessed and distributed the previous Palm Sunday, and treasured or offered by our boys. There is a low wooden screen, with three returned stalls, and miserere seats, on the decani and cantoris side. Two pillars rise on each side of the gates, and support a massive rood-beam, from which the rood (a cross, not crucifix) towers. On the screen lies a red silk veil, and a wooden cross for the boys to kiss. Usually red curtains east of the screen hang from the rood-beam. In the chancel are two narrow lancets,

without the lancet point, in the south wall ; under the easternmost is the credence, under the other a massive bench let into a wood-lined recess forms the sedilia.

A platform and three steps lead up to the altar, which is protected by a wooden canopy on four pillars, touching the east wall, a very fair reproduction of the interesting one in the north aisle of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna. The altar is ornamented with a cross and candles only, besides the frontal.

THE CHAPEL IN THE SUMMER STATION: SÎR

A small building which resembles a chapel with a galilee. It has a rood-beam and rood, steps to the altar, sedilia. The east end hung with curtains. Outside the door is a porch, so that the clergy can go into the dining-room which they use as a vestry, without going into the open air. The villagers can come into the chapel without entering the house. There is no native church at Sîr. The walls of the chapel are mud, nicely finished off, the windows adorned, not with stained glass, but calico. The mountain towers 2100 feet sharp above the back of the chapel, which is 5700 feet above the level of the sea.

THE SISTERS' CHAPEL: URMI

Our Chapel is very small ; it is quite square, and then the sanctuary is the apse on the east end of the square. I think it looks very nice. The most beautiful time to see it is about six in the evening on an early summer day. Just then the sun comes in through the coloured glass of the large Persian window and throws its reflections on the sanctuary hangings and across the altar ; sometimes the colouring is most wonderfully beautiful. We use here as

much as we can native things, and one thing which is very good here are some pottery vases, coloured greeny-blue. They are seldom exactly the same shade, some more green and some more blue, and these we use for extra flower vases. They show well against the terra-cotta, and when at festival times these vases are full of different flowers the play of reflected colour across them is splendidly gorgeous and fades away into softer colour as the sun lowers.

CHAPTER V

SHAQIATI

URMI, *March* 1894.

THE plain of Urmi is exceedingly fertile, nearly every kind of fruit is grown (except oranges and lemons), also cereals, cotton, tobacco, &c. This fertility is produced by the loamy soil, and the extensive system of irrigation employed. All through the spring and early summer there is abundance of water from the melting snows of the mountains. This water is carried in channels or ditches all over the vast plain, and we cannot help being struck with the fact that, in a country where bridges (few as they are) are allowed to decay, and, with roads that it seems no one's business to look after, these irrigating streams (*shaqiati*, as they are called) are not only *made* but maintained.

When these *shaqiati* cross a road at the level, they are left quite open, but if it is necessary to cross 5 or 6 feet higher than the road, the only thought of the engineer (?) is to carry the water, and leave the road to take care of itself, so far as the gradients on each side are concerned. Generally, however, these *shaqiati*, which vary in width from 1 to 6 feet, are covered over with stones, which are always more or less (generally more) out of repair, and leave ample opportunity for the equestrian to break a leg of his horse.

The reason for the care taken of the water is that there is no rent—as we understand it—but that the village-master (equal to squire or landlord) is paid in kind, and so no

water would mean no rent for him. Cereals are thus taxed, half for the village-master, and half for the husbandman who does all the work, except the engineering of the water-courses, which is done by the village-master. All threshing is done on the public threshing floor—the agent of the village-master having a lofty stand erected in the centre of the same. For grapes, tobacco, cotton, &c., some proportion of the crop by weight is taken.

There being no hedges to divide the land, cattle and sheep feed in herds in charge of a boy, and are taxed (as rent for pasture) so much a head.

Coming to the city, one finds the *shaqiati* intersect it like a net-work: they run down the centre of a street, or across it, just in the same way as in the country, only here they are seldom more than 2 or 3 feet wide, and, as a rule, only a foot. On the top side of the city, where these enter the walls, the water is quite clear and fit to drink, but through every court one or more *shaqiati* pass, and there is an *hawuz* or pond, through which the *shaqiati* flows, built with stone sides about 12 feet by 6 feet by 4 feet deep, where the family washing, both of the clothes and person, takes place, where pots and pans are cleaned, &c., &c. In speaking of washing, of course, it must be borne in mind that soap is almost if not quite unknown.

We have a well with moderately good water, but all our own drinking water is carried from a *shaqiati* about a quarter of a mile away, and outside the city walls. The boys drink from the well, and often, to save themselves the trouble of letting down the bucket, will stoop and drink from the *shaqiati* like a horse, though we have forbidden it. One good thing about the *shaqiati*, or those that pass through our yard at all events, is that there is nearly always a good "stream on," and often one will be running in the morning and the other in the afternoon, which seems to point to some management of the same.

Those that pass through our yard are fairly clear, but not exactly like crystal, and sometimes, when one sees the cook washing a couple of fowls—which he has just plucked—in the *hawuz*, one almost wishes there were such things as high-pressure mains.

We are fairly close to the walls, but I am told that a little way beyond us the water may almost be cut with a knife, and when infectious diseases are about the people wash their clothes just the same!

When the water in their own yard is too dirty for even a Syrian and Mussulman to drink, they carry it from the nearest clean place, or from a well, as we do.

E. H. H.

A SYRIAN OUTPOST

The pretty village of Ula, which has been my home for several months past, is situated in the fertile plain of Salmas, some few miles north of the Lake of Urmi, and a two-days' journey on horseback from our headquarters. All its houses are of mud, as is usual in Persia, but they are, for the most part substantially built and well-kept; and not only is the village pervaded by an air of cleanliness—conspicuously wanting in many Persian villages—but the abundance of well-grown trees, mainly poplars, willows, and walnuts, and the gardens and vineyards around, render it strikingly picturesque. This is especially the case just now, when the near approach of winter is proclaimed by the rich, varying hues of the foliage. The effect, too, is greatly enhanced by the bold, rugged mountains, already capped with snow, by which the villages of this plain are shut in on all sides.

Often when I am out riding in the afternoon I am almost overcome by the loveliness of the surrounding scene, bathed in the ever-changing, rosy, golden light of the setting sun. Again and again I feel constrained to give expression to my

feelings to the youth who generally accompanies me, though I know only too well that the Syrian is not easily roused to the admiration of nature, and I am certain to get the somewhat damping reply, "It is because it is autumn, Rabbi, the leaves always turn yellow before they fall," or "It's always like that on the mountains, Rabbi, when the sun is going to rest."

This village has one hundred and fifty houses—about fifty are Christian, the rest Mussulman. Unfortunately, only a small proportion of the Christians now remain Old Church; a few—a very few—are Presbyterians, under the influence of the American Mission; a good many are Roman Catholics. The neighbouring village of Khosrawa, containing about four thousand houses, is wholly Roman. I have endeavoured to estimate the population of these villages from the number of their houses, but I cannot definitely decide what is a true average. About the Mussulmans I know very little; and the Syrians of each family have a custom of remaining together—quite without regard to the size of the premises—to the third or fourth generation. This, and the further fact that all Syrians, save the Nazarites destined for the Episcopate, marry, and at a very early age, makes it plain that the estimated number of inmates of a house must be higher than we reckon, for instance, in England. Thus, the house I live in, consisting of two rooms, contains a dozen souls, whilst the house of my back neighbour has seventeen.

From the strength of popular opinion against any member—married or single—leaving the *Baita*, one realises, as is scarcely possible in the West, the force of the graphic touch in the parable of the Prodigal, whose first step in his downward career was leaving the parental roof.

Round about Ula are extensive melon fields, which produce abundant fruit with very little trouble, and afford their owners, for the most part poor peasants, a staple article of

food during the winter. This year they promised well, but just as the fruit was ripening a slight frost came and destroyed all. It was a sorry sight. Whole fields of big melons and pumpkins, all but ready for gathering, frost-nipped, and utterly useless. Yet, I do not think the faintest murmur escaped the lips of either Mussulman or Christian ; and when I expressed admiring surprise at this, the answer invariably was, "What shall I say ? It is the will of GOD !"

The frost also did considerable damage to the vines ; and the wine in consequence is of inferior quality, and less abundant than usual.

Our great support, and indeed, a very tower of strength to us here, is the parish priest, a most devout, venerable man of some three-score years and six. He is a gunsmith, as well as parish priest, and is held in high esteem, by Mussulmans and Christians alike, both for his skill in his very unremunerative trade, and for his personal holiness of life. Often when a Mussulman has a sick friend, he will bring a piece of twisted cotton wick for the priest to bless, which will then be burnt in an oil lamp near the sick person's bed, in hope of his recovery.

Often, too, Mussulmans when ill come and sleep outside the church door, or make an offering of a few candles of beeswax, or a little oil or incense.

The reputed cures are both numerous and remarkable. But the Qasha has other tales about the church no less wonderful, though of a different character. More than once he has told me how, when he was but a lad and his father-in-law was parish priest, two Mussulmans came one night to steal some melons which — perhaps somewhat incongruously—had been placed in the church for safety. One of them entered by a small window, and gathered the melons into a sack. But, on trying to lift it, he found it was too heavy. He took out some of them, but was still unable. He gradually reduced the number till only two or

three remained, but with no better success. Then he became thoroughly frightened, and tried to escape empty-handed, but was quite unable to find the window. He called to his accomplice outside, but without avail. So he remained a prisoner all night, and when the old priest came in the early morning to say prayers, he released him. But the culprit's mouth was drawn on one side, and his face was all askew, and so remained till his death which occurred several years after.

Lately the good Qasha and his son Shamasha Gauriel—the parish deacon, a very excellent and cultured young man who formerly studied in our school at Urmi—have been busy rebuilding the church which had fallen into partial decay. It is now all but finished, and, though built only of mud and sun-dried bricks, it really presents a very creditable appearance. The priest and his son have practically done the whole work themselves ; yet, all the time it has been going forward, the old man has daily sung the morning and evening prayers in the little ante-chapel used during the summer months, though often so tired out by his day's work as to have to lean heavily on his stick the while for support. He knows by heart the entire psalter, and what is perhaps even more wonderful, all the long prayers and memorials and varying anthems of the Syrian services, and never uses a book except for an occasional preface or anthem on a festival. He is very poor, has never read anything but his church books ; he firmly believes many very curious old-world things handed down from his forbears ; but he is a perfect gentleman in every true sense of the word. In consideration of his extreme poverty and the good work he does in preaching and teaching his small flock—and that under great difficulties—the Mission assigned him what is known as a "Catechising Grant," amounting to about thirty shillings a year. Few could need it more ; yet, when I offered him the first instalment, he absolutely

refused it, saying, "I cannot receive a wage for doing what is but my duty." It was only by consultation with his son that I succeeded in getting him to accept it; though, when he did agree to do so, he expressed the greatest gratitude. This is no mean testimony in a country where greed of gain is a widespread evil. If he would only give up his faith for Romanism he would be comparatively a rich man, and his son—in spite of the fact that he is married and has a family—would at once be ordained a priest and receive a good wage. But he has steadfastly resisted all advances, and has proved himself indeed the very "salt of the earth." Would that the Syrian Church could boast of many such!—her present condition, and the future outlook, would be very different from what it is. But all in GOD'S good time!

F. F. I.

URMI, *November 10th*, 1894.

We heard to-day that Shamasha Ishai would arrive in the afternoon to make a stay of indefinite length with us. All available horses were therefore saddled and we rode out 3 or 4 miles to meet him.

He was accompanied by a couple of Turkish Zaptiehs, whose ragged appearance was only equalled by the emaciated condition of their horses, and about half a dozen other mounted men.

Ishai himself was a striking figure: he wore the ordinary fez, covered entirely, save the crown, by a black *pushea*, and a long dark-blue coat with a large fur collar.

He saluted us with that easy grace which makes one wonder where such manners can have been learnt in his rocky mountain home, and we had a pleasant ramble back to the city, where, upon dismounting, he was conducted to his room, and after further expressions of welcome, pipes and coffee were the order of the day.

FUNERAL OF SHAMASHA ISHAI (DEACON JESSE)

On Saturday morning February 2nd, 1895, Shamasha Ishai, the half-brother of Mar Shimun, died in the hospital of the American Presbyterian Mission. I went at once to consult with the family, as Ishai was our guest, and we should be responsible for much that took place. The early conferences were quiet, and various places of burial were suggested; my own scheme that the body should be carried to Qudshanis, resting each night in a well-known church, and being escorted each day by the people from the last village, was generally approved, until it was examined. Then the troubles and difficulties presented themselves, and the plan was dropped. Mar Gauriel bustled in at this time, and began to weep. He urged very strongly that permission should be obtained from the governor to bring the body into the city, that it might be buried in Mart Mariam, the bishop's church. It was felt that his permission was out of the question: noble Khans even not being carried through the gates. The replies were very courteous, but suggested the church of Charbash, on the mountain road, while with Eastern delicacy a refusal in plain words was not given. A military band was offered, an honour until now exclusively reserved for the very highest Persian nobility of the army.

The Shabandar, vice-consul of the Turkish government, and acting officially on behalf of Mar Shimun, was persuaded into sending a second appeal, which he read publicly as a proof of his earnest endeavour to do what was wanted.

Everybody was busy by now, and rich in suggestion. The American yard was full; detachments from various villages were continually pouring in. It was proposed to buy a piece of land outside the city, and consecrate it people offered to subscribe the money. The dead body

was inspected by everybody, clad in deacon's vestments, while the servants were standing by.

The governor's second response was to the point. He sent the serperast in person, and a band of more than thirty musicians to take the body to Charbash. From sheer despair of finding a new plan, the friends decided upon a temporary burial there, and the Presbyterians held a speech day in their large hall. A small boy read a poem of his own composition, a dialogue between Death and Ishai, another read the lament of David over Jonathan, substituting Ishai for Jonathan.

The coffin was laid upon the American's sleigh, and an enormous procession started to Charbash. The sight on the broad avenue leading to the city was grandly picturesque. Crowds of women who were gathered under the city walls, flew upon the coffin, and sobbed; mobbing it in their excitement. We joined the procession here with our processional cross and censers, and the crowd slowly walked in the evening shade, round the city, across the fields of snow and ice, and up the avenue to Charbash to the military music of the band. It was met near the village by the men bearing lamps and candles, and the appearance was that of a torch-light procession, solemnified by the hushed sobbings, like the gentle swaying of the branches of trees. It was a tremble rather than a cry. The village presented a great sight. The flat roofs were covered by gaily-dressed women holding candles, and sobbing loudly. The coffin was mobbed several times before it was laid in the dark church.

Early on Monday we all walked to Charbash and entered a crowded church. Mar Gauriel was wearing his grandest vestment, and had turned it inside out for mourning. Several priests holding lighted tapers began to sing the offices, with numerous interruptions. The coffin was carried up and down the church frequently, east

and west, north and south. At one appropriate opportunity, when Mar Shimun's name occurred in a prayer, a pious one well known to us roared out, "Whose heart is broken in these days." We wore surplices and hoods, and stood silently amazed. Mar Yonan's leg was too painful to allow of exertion, and he sat quietly on a chair.

Mr. Daltry had waited in the city for the Qurbana, and arrived with Hakim Oshana in time to calm a great disturbance outside the church as to where the photograph should be taken.

A new procession was roughly formed, headed by the processional cross, and a clumsy table on which to rest the coffin. Several heads were set on fire by the candles, and put out promptly. There was much pushing, and the band played lustily. At last everything was arranged, the photograph was taken, and we returned to church. A serperast's servant usefully beat off unnecessary intruders, and it is interesting to notice that one comic bandsman, having independently played a wrong and giddy tune, was afterwards well beaten by his chief.

The governor's horse, nobly caparisoned, was there, as well as one or two horses of honour. Ishai's horse was led by his Turkish zaptieh.

Prayers were continued in the church; one careless priest set light to the sanctuary curtain; an Armenian priest conversed with Mar Yonan. The face of the coffin lid was uncovered, and a great tumult took place, amid which one could see the mourners beating their heads, and hear them howling. The body was buried in the church. The men left the church; by degrees we got out the women and children. Mr. Edington superintended the closing in of the grave.

Tolerable quiet reigns now, but people are continually coming to the city from different villages with fresh suggestions. The body is watched, and the proper prayers are being said.

The venerable priest of Mar Bhishu, the chief church between Qudshanis and here, is also just dead.

D. J.

CONDOLENCE WITH THE CATHOLICOS

After the death of Shamasha Ishai someone had to go to Qudshanis on our behalf to convey an expression of our sorrow and sympathy. It seemed that I could be most easily spared from the city to represent the head of the Mission on this special business, and I was allowed to take with me a very capable and agreeable Syrian, who has formerly acted as guide to Mr. Browne and Mr. Riley.

The party was a large one, and consisted chiefly of Mar Auraham and about twenty - five gentry, servants, and villagers from the royal village. Shamasha Shlimun, the Presbyterian cousin, was sent up by the Americans, and made himself a most agreeable companion. Shamasha Yonan, the brother of Sh. Ishai's widow, was also with us; and the servants who had been in the city with Sh. Ishai.

In Mar Bhishu I had the opportunity of private talks with the family of Qasha Ishai, who had died on the same day as Sh. Ishai of Qudshanis. In the evening we held a great council, to decide whether it was right that Sh. Yonan, a refugee in Persia, should risk himself in the government city of Diza, and in the districts of inimical Kurds. As is usual in such matters the advice of the council was rejected. He went up in disguise with a friendly Kurd and one of Mar Shimun's zaptiehs, and arrived safely with us.

We sent back our horses from Mar Bhishu, and had a terribly trying walk to Diza. Only a few of us reached the city, late at night, and over-fatigued. The main detachment preferred to sleep in a nearer village. Through the kindness of a Kurdish gentleman a bare-backed horse was provided for me in the evening, when I was reduced to the

miserable condition of halting between two strong supporters.

Every attention and courtesy were shown to me in Diza, owing to the energetic action which Mr. Hillyard had taken after my treatment there last summer.

A heavy snow-storm came on, soon after we had started on the Gawar Plain, and we could only plod through the snow to the first village on the mountain road. We were blocked up in this miserable Kurdish village for two days, and some of us suffered considerably as the result of impure air, and too close proximity to stables and farm-yard. The remainder of the journey was more successful.

There is abundant reason to feel sure that Mar Shimun and his household have felt very keenly both the devotion of the Mission to his brother, and its courtesy in sending a representative at that time of the year. Owing to repeated falls of snow I was kept a prisoner in the village for six weeks, and should have suffered considerably from the fast had not the tact and kindness of Mar Shimun's sister arranged that I should be secretly provided with milk and butter.

On the first evening Mar Shimun cried quietly a good deal, after then he controlled himself entirely. The death of his brother is not only the severest family affliction which could have befallen him, but also considerably increases the difficulty of ruling in a divided family.

This is my second visit to Qudshanis; I wish I could find an excuse for being sent up again. The courtesy and confidence of the Catholicos, the pleasantness of the ladies, the pretty ways of the little children, and the pleasure of being with my brother Browne, cause me to feel sad, as I write, at the thought that I may not see the village again for a long time.

As our brother never advertises himself, I may be excused a little sketch of his life there. He lives up a rickety stair-

case in a room which is comfortable for a mediæval monk, and suggests an untidy doctor's dispensary. Here he studies old Syriac when time allows, receives guests at almost any hour of the day, and deals out medicines liberally. Mountain village teachers come to him, and all visitors from a distance who are paying respects to their chief. From conversations in this room he learns the ins and outs of internal politics. Then he has his gossips with Sulti in the kitchens, or with the young mother in the sitting-room, and as opportunity affords gives counsel and sympathy. I hope that he may live to see one fruit of his labour, in the well-formed Christian characters of Ishai's young children. His life is both a busy and a troubled one.

On the first evening I knelt beside Mar Shimun, and kissing his hand, tried to tell him of my sorrow in his affliction. After then we mentioned Ishai's name from time to time in general conversation, in order that he should become used from the first to speak of him; and we tried to interest him in outside matters and to keep him bright. But it was left to a Kurdish chief from Julamerk to make the first direct advance. Presenting the ladies with new handkerchiefs for the head, he unwrapt the black ones which were being worn all over the red Turkish fez; and this gave the signal that the days of mourning were over. Upon a hint given to me I attempted the next stage, and asked Mar Shimun, on my last night in Qudshanis, to wind up the watch which his Grace had given him, a deed which we assured him would give great satisfaction to our Archbishop as a convincing proof that he was not sitting down under his sorrow. I am sorry to say that the watch has again been put away until it can be safely sent to England. It seems to be suffering from a little dust.

On that night for about the fourth time Mar Shimun said that he would only let Browne come down with me if I would promise to send him back very quickly. So the

promise was given, and we started after making a rather sad farewell in the kitchen, where Sulti utterly broke down. The return was easier than the earlier journey had been, but was sufficiently exhausting. I have no time to tell how we got up early in the morning to walk on frozen snow, how we were carried through an ice-cold river on the backs of Kurds, how we had a breeze with a small band of soldiers about some horses, and the other incidents of Turkish travel. Nor have I written of politics, although eye and ear were open, and opportunity not lacking. We were in Urmi for our Easter Communion.

D. J.

URMI, *Autumn* 1895.

On September 26, Browne came down from the mountains, accompanied by Sulti and Surma—the sister and daughter of Shamasha Ishai, who died here last February. The object of the relatives' journey was to visit the grave and to see about some suitable stone being erected over it. We went out to meet them, and then all went at once to the church in Charbash in which he was buried. After a few days spent in the village of Charbash, Sulti and Surma came and stayed as the guests of the Sisters, and seemed thoroughly to enjoy their stay with them, which lasted about seven weeks. They were everywhere received with great honour, and the expressions of loyalty towards the house of Mar Shimun were very marked.

October 29 was quite a red-letter day. Edington arrived back safely, accompanied by Tidswell as our doctor, and the new Sisters. We went out to meet them with all available force, and had quite a triumphal entry into the city. The travellers seem to have had as good a journey as is possible, considering the country and the means of locomotion.

A WINTER'S OUTLOOK FROM URMI

In the city itself the deacons' school will be dispersed, to supply teachers for the villages. There will remain only one small class in the deacons' school, instead of three classes, which will be composed of promotions from the boys' schools, and those of the deacons' school who are ready for their first year. The boys' school will read as usual, in its two classes, and a few teachers who will be set at liberty will be sent to important village schools which need capable management. It is during these winter months that the best education can be given. It is valuable to insist for the first year upon all deacons reading regularly from October to Easter. In this way only can they get a real grounding in their books. What can be done in one year by a steady fellow who really wants to learn may be illustrated by the case of Shamasha Daniel, of Jîlu, the son of the priest of Zerini. When he came down to Urmi last autumn he could not write, and knew nothing but some of his prayers and a little old Syriac. He soon taught himself to write, and before he went home in the spring he had written an abridgment of the Sunhadus (Book of Canon Law) and had attained to a more satisfactory knowledge of his church books. He is not, of course, a scholar yet, but if he be ordained by Mar Sergis of Jîlu to help his father, who is very old, he will have an intelligent knowledge of his duties, and will be able to do Qurbana, and say his prayers, in a reverent manner, seeing that he has had the opportunity of being present at Mart Mariam many times, and has been carefully taught both the order and the meaning of the priestly duties. He has also read catechism, been instructed in Bible history, and heard sermons. What I have written of this deacon applies equally to others. It is surprising how quickly mountaineers fall into our ways,

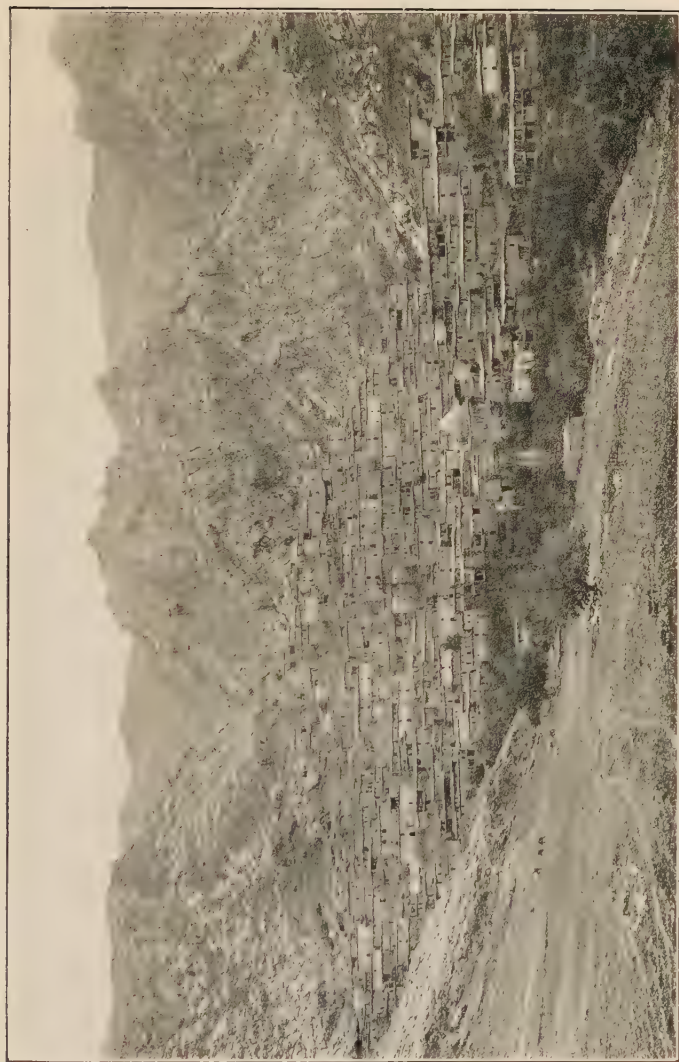
and appreciate the value of preaching and instructions when they find themselves in Urmi. For example, a priest of Mar Bhishu, who taught for us last year in the high school, and is now in his own village, is asking advice about more frequent celebrations of the Holy Communion and Sunday catechisings. We have advised him to proceed with caution. A sudden increase in the number of the celebrations of the mysteries is attended with serious dangers, where the people are not well instructed, and are not prepared for the advance. He may be able also to inaugurate catechising on Sunday for the children during the winter months, when the schools are reading, and thus break the ice without stirring up opposition.

From the Sisters' School a few of the more advanced girls will teach in their own homes, while the others will go on steadily with their books and household duties in the Sisters' yard. The infant school, which is often called the Mart Mariam School, and which is held in one of the Sisters' rooms, will also be reading.

These educational works, together with the printing press and the reception of visitors, and consultation about law business, will not occupy the whole of the Mission energies. We must look out beyond our own yards to the Church in the villages of Mar Gauriel's diocese, and first of all to the village schools, which will be taught for three and a half months by our scholars. There will probably be not quite so many of them this winter as in the past few years, as we are proposing to drop schools which the villagers have not taken the trouble to supply with enough children. This will combine a little economy with a well-deserved rebuke and warning, a very satisfactory combination. As to the importance of these schools there cannot be two opinions. They are centres of Church life, and encouragement and hope. They teach the little children the elements of the faith, and a smattering of secular education, very far

from enough to unsettle them, or make them look to us for help, but enough, we hope, to help under GOD'S blessing, in making them brave and good and true. But beyond their influence upon the scholars is their effect upon the homes and villages. A little congregation of children taken to prayers every day in the church, and a small child learning his elementary catechism in the home, are two influences beyond the school. A third influence is through ourselves: we are in duty bound to go to these villages periodically to see the schools, and this gives an opportunity of pleasant intercourse with the priest, or a few "white beards," and perhaps our chances of a little simple instruction in the school-room when parents are present, or of a sermon in church. Another valuable agent is the teacher himself, if he be worth his salt. He will be regular and intelligent in his attendance at prayers; he may even preach on Sunday, or at any rate read the Scriptures. If he be a deacon he is still more useful; and a really first-rate teacher will teach the Creed and LORD'S Prayer in the evenings to some people in their houses. I feel almost ashamed of myself to be writing this, because I have done so very little village work, owing to other engagements; but that fact does not separate me from my brethren in regarding this branch of work as perhaps the most influential for good on the Church at large. The village schools are Church missions.

It must not be supposed that this represents the whole Mission agency of the diocese. We have in our employment as catechists and superintendents of schools, a few priests, of whom I propose to write a few words. Certain of them receive a sum amounting to less than two pounds a year, and are pledged for this to preach every Sunday in one of their villages. The plan seems good, but we are not able to see if the work is thoroughly or really capably done. It gives us, however, a slight hold upon these priests who are mostly very poor, and makes them more interested



AKRI

in our schools in their villages. A few priests are really capable preachers. They are assisted in their work by the priests from the teachers of the high school, and by one or two deacons who are sent Sunday by Sunday to villages which are not properly supplied.

The priests of Dizateka, Wazirawa, and Gugtapah are said to be good preachers. I have heard the priest of Mar Sergis preach an excellent sermon upon the ten lepers, and he is regular in his duties in his several villages. Qasha Benjamin of Charbash, who is a strong man, and keeps his villages under some control, is supposed to be a preacher, and from time to time we hear that he has been to one village or another. In his own village we put one of our larger schools, to be taught by an older scholar who has a certificate, and this school reads until Easter.

Qasha Dawid of Degalah has somewhat different work, and superintends Sunday schools. In his own village there is a very large school, split up into classes, and taught by men of the village. It is an adult Sunday school.

The priest of Gugtapah is still more satisfactory. He not only has a Sunday school to which we have lately made a grant of 50 codices (let us call them Churchman's almanacks), so that the lessons may be uniform, and taken from a comparison of the Sunday lessons, but his large village schools are self-supporting. He has had Lutheran training in Germany, and is a well-meaning man, but not well instructed in Church teaching. He is one of the few priests who shepherd their people.

There is one other, not a village priest, of whom something should be said. Qasha Oshana, known as of Siperghan, but now resident in Urmi, has a decided gift for preaching. Some time ago he began to work up the village of Gulpashan, which was in a very bad state, and he has now thoroughly revived the church there. When this began to be promising, he took under his care the

deacons of the village, and led them on, and afterwards was able to break ground in a new village, while not losing control over Gulpashan. Matters have now reached this pass: that both villages can stand alone, with some superintendence from him, and he is ready to tackle a third dead city, if these others can be permanently provided for. It remains to be seen how far the new life is sufficiently genuine and deep to make the villagers willing to pay for their religious privileges, and whether we can help them by a little well-timed assistance. It is proposed to put into Gulpashan a priest who was at one time a teacher of ours, and who has read with us. The superintendence of these villages will be organised. One of us will take Ardishai and certain villages about it, another will have Dizateka and other villages, and a third will look after the schools near the city, and we must trust to favourable opportunities for open doors in different villages. The closing of the deacon's school both gives us leisure for more village work, and gives us, by means of the village schools, a more favourable entrance.

D. J.

DISTRESS AMONG THE SYRIANS

During the last few months events of an untoward character have befallen the Syrians, both of the plain of Urmi, and those on the borderland and in Turkey.

Taking matters in chronological order, the first visitation that befel them affected mainly the district of Urmi, which lies along the banks of the river Nazlu, between the mountain village of Mar Bhishu in Turkey, and that of Siperghan, situated at the point where the river discharges itself into the Lake of Urmi.

The beginning of evil was a landslip, during the month of May, just below Mar Bhishu, which blocked the river

for a day or two, and then the water, which had gathered in considerable bulk, forced its way through the *débris*, and gradually flowed off in the river channel, doing no more serious damage than rooting up trees on the banks, flooding some fields, and carrying off the middle piers and arches of the very fine and substantial brick bridge of Chanqaralui, which spanned the river on the much-frequented caravan route between Urmi and Gavilan.

Then came another landslip, which appears to have been a huge solid mass of rock, and which still more effectually dammed the river, causing the ravine, whose mouth is closed, to become a vast lake. The water reached to the sheepfolds of Mar Bhishu, which is situated high up the mountain side.

This continued for eight days, and then with great difficulty the men of Mar Bhishu succeeded in digging a channel, with a view to letting the water flow off by degrees. They seem, however, not to have gauged very scientifically the tremendous force of such a body of water, and the result was a sudden overwhelming rush, which flooded great tracts of the plain along the entire course of the river, tearing up huge trees, wrecking vineyards, fields, and orchards, destroying houses, and even entire villages; causing much immediate distress by leaving whole families homeless, and in many cases without means of getting food, and inflicting more permanent damage by obliterating the sprouting crops on which depends the winter supply of food.

Just after the catastrophe Mr. Edington and I rode through a large portion of the desolated district, and formed with our own eyes a judgment on the loss sustained and the future outlook. It is a matter for thankfulness that the flood came in the daytime; had it occurred at night it might have caused considerable loss of life. As it was, only one person was drowned, although many have since

fallen ill from exposure and fright, or from injuries received from the rushing tide. One man, clinging to an uprooted tree, was carried a distance of four miles upon the face of the stream, at terrific speed, but eventually escaped alive, and with only comparatively slight injury.

Considerable damage has also been done by the swelling of the lake of Urmi, which, owing to this sudden influx of water, and also to the unusually large rainfall this year, has on all sides considerably passed its bounds, and in some parts, notably around Sipurghan, destroyed vineyards, fields, and pasture land; and owing to the extreme saltiness of the water, it is anticipated that years must elapse before the ground will recover, even if the lake eventually recedes.

Mussulmans as well as Christians have suffered, and indeed the five villages which have been swept completely away were entirely Mussulman.

To turn next to the outlying mountain districts, the murder of Mar Gauriel and his companion in June was the signal for a beginning of active hostilities on the part of the Kurds generally. Already news has reached us of two considerable villages in Gawar, and two others in the district of Van, being looted and some of the inhabitants killed.

The survivors are, of course, destitute, and we know not how many more villages may be laid waste before the autumn.

F. F. I.

July 1896.

CHAPTER VI

THE MURDER OF THE BISHOP MAR GAURIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS BY THE KURDS

A GREAT disaster has fallen upon the Syrians by the murder of the Nestorian Bishop in Urmi, Mar Gauriel, and his twelve companions. Great in itself, it may be found hereafter to be only the beginning of further disasters.

Some few weeks ago, Mar Gauriel expressed his intention of going up to the mountains, and, as it afterwards appeared, he crossed the Turkish frontier with the view of visiting the Matran in Nochea, his ecclesiastical superior, next in rank to Mar Shimun.

He first of all went up into the Plain of Tergawar, and stopped in the villages of that district for some few days, and while there the people, who wished to visit the Matran, gathered round him. While he was there, he was warned that in carrying out his intention he would be incurring the very greatest danger, and was most strongly advised to give up his intention, but to this he gave no heed, relying, we suppose, on letters of friendship and introduction to the Kurdish Sheikh, who is all-powerful in that district.

The party consisted of the Bishop, the Matran's Arch-deacon, Qasha Dinkha, two priests, three deacons, and others, fourteen persons in all. After leaving Tergawar, their first day's journey brought them to the village and house of the Kurdish Sheikh. He happened to be away, but they were entertained in the Sheikh's house that night, and on the morrow resumed their journey to the Matran's.

It is said, however, that another warning was given to them in the Sheikh's house, and one can only imagine that it was not acted upon, because there was absolutely no other plan for them to follow, promising success, and which did not involve others, as well as themselves, in great danger.

While they were at the Matran's, the Sheikh himself visited them, and although he refused to accept the Matran's hospitality, in itself an ominous sign, yet he gave the party a most pressing invitation to his house on their way down. It seems probable that two of the deacons were ordained priests by the Matran. The party descended, and stayed again for the night at the Sheikh's house.

The following day they were sent on their way with an escort of the Sheikh's servants, and nothing more is known about them, but that their bodies were found, fearfully mutilated, in a ravine some few miles on the Persian side of the frontier. The Bishop was found to have had his head cut open by a sword gash, his stomach ripped up, his head nearly severed from his body, and to have been stripped of all his clothes. His nephew was found in very much the same state. Qasha Dinkha, the Matran's Archdeacon, was found stripped and stabbed in many places, and his beard cut off, the greatest indignity one can do to a priest in this country. His body showed, too, to what great sufferings he had been subjected before his death; it was found to be black with bruises, the result of the Kurds having beaten him with the stocks of their guns. The deacon's body was so fearfully cut about, that before it could be removed by his friends for burial, it had to be wrapped up in a blanket; another, a priest, had his head entirely cut off from his body; another, formerly a chief servant in Mar Shimun's house, was stabbed in seventeen places.

The news was brought to us on Friday, June 26th, but at first one almost refused to believe it; however, early on the next day, there was no room to doubt any further, for the

bodies of the Bishop and his nephew were then in the village of Charbash, just outside the walls of Urmi. On the same day, the bodies were carried to the Bishop's village of Ardishai, about twenty miles distant, and on the following day, the funeral service was conducted by Mar Yonan, the Bishop of the northern portion of the Plain of Urmi, assisted by many of the priests and deacons of both the dioceses; as many of us too, as were able, also attended the funeral.

One can give no reason for the murder, except the hatred of the Kurds towards all Christians, and, perhaps in this case, the fear that they might carry down to Urmi news of the state of the mountains of Kurdistan. It was well known that for a long time past the Sheikh had been wishing to get into his power Qasha Dinkha, the Matran's Archdeacon, on account of this suspicion.

From later reports we hear that the Matran and two priests, his father and uncle, have been seized by the Sheikh, and that he has collected a band of two thousand Kurds, giving as the reason that he is afraid that the Christians of Tergawar will attack him; but most probably his real intention is to come down and destroy the Christian villages in that district.

The Persian Government is doing what it can to protect these people, but the situation for them is extremely serious and may easily end in a general attack on all the Christians living near the Kurdish districts.

A. R. E.

July 10, 1896.

SUMMER WORK AT SÎR

We followed the precedent set last year, by summoning our permanent teachers to a fortnight's course of lectures at Sîr (June 27th-July 11th). We were to have begun with a Syrian Eucharist at the Church of Mar Sergis on June 28th, but on the Saturday morning, as we were

preparing to receive the students, Mr. Jenks rode up from the city with the appalling news of the murder of Mar Gauriel and his companions. This naturally threw our arrangements into confusion for the time being, and some of the Mission Clergy and deacons had to set out at once to be present at the funeral of the Bishop in Ardishai on the following day. However, we were able on Tuesday, after a solemn Qurbana at Mar Sergis, to begin the lectures, which were successfully carried out. The subjects chosen were the 1st Epistle to St. Timothy, the Epistles of St. Ignatius, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and Babylonian and Persian history in connection with the Old Testament.

Besides this, four sermons were delivered on chosen subjects, and sermon notes given for the use of those who preach in their villages. On the Sunday all attended our English celebration in our own chapel; and, at the conclusion of the lectures, we again had Qurbana, at which Qasha Khoshaba preached a really excellent and well-thought-out sermon upon "Godliness with contentment is great gain," being a portion of the Epistle for the day. We were afraid at one time that the gathering would have to be broken up in the first week. Owing to the recent massacre, the young men were in such a state of nervous apprehension that they refused to remain round our tents at night, as being too far away from the village for safety. After various *pourparlers*, we finally allowed them to sleep nearer the house, and eventually the meeting came to a successful termination.

Some three days' journey away, just the other side of the Persian frontier, there is a large plain inhabited by Syrians and Kurds, Gawar by name. The word Gawar has always conveyed to my mind the very embodiment of poverty and distress, at least so far as the Christians are concerned. This is due to a large extent to the depredations of the Kurds who live in the surrounding mountains,

and also to the fact that from time to time the plain is visited by a plague of locusts. The result of these things is that though a good wheat-growing district, hundreds of the Syrians come down to the plains of Persia every winter, scatter in the various Christian villages and in the Syrian quarter of the city itself, and beg for bread from house to house, or work as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" for the more well-to-do in return for the necessities of life. This year the locusts have hardly been seen, but life has been rendered intolerable, even during the summer, owing to the more-than-ordinary depredations of the Kurds, resulting in loss of life and the complete sacking of some of the villages. The people went up to their homes as usual this spring, but the recent disturbances have caused them to return to what they prefer to regard merely as their winter quarters. In the city there are large numbers of them, in garments more picturesque than desirable, an example of how at least one so-called civilised Government takes care of its loyal and industrious subjects.

I once asked several of these people who were on their way back to the mountains in the spring, why they did not stay in the plains during the summer, and they replied, "What, stay here in the summer and drink warm water!" This does not imply that our springs and rivers provide us with hot water, but merely that people who could not afford to buy ice would find the water undrinkable, compared with their own mountain streams. One had always regarded bread alone as the staff of life, but those people seem to think otherwise. This summer I fear they will have to choose the lesser of two evils in the shape of warm water, rather than incur the risk of starvation or murder by the Kurds.

KURDS IN ULA

Last evening about 9 o'clock we were sitting chatting in the yard of the priest, Qasha Mushi, with whom I now have my quarters in Ula, after our evening meal—my host and his family (the women included) taking grateful whiffs at the hubble-bubble, the pipe of peace—when suddenly the village dogs began to bark, and there was a distant sound of voices, and the tramp of horses, and the ominous whisper "Kurds" went round. At the same moment a lad looking down from the housetop told us that indeed some fifty mounted Kurds, armed of course to the teeth, had arrived, and no one knew what would happen.

The first counsel of prudence was to extinguish all lights, lock up the house and yard, and ascend to our sleeping-places on the roof. Here we found most of the people had already retired to rest, and like us, had been disturbed by the approach of the Kurds.

Gradually the truth became known; there were 100 of them under their leader, Qasim Agha, Kurds of the region of Somai, known as Sheshaknai. They had come, it appeared, to curry favour with Government, by meeting the new prince-governor of Urmi at Diliman, who was on his way to take possession of his province, hoping doubtless in return, without forsaking their predatory habits, to be recognised as irregular cavalry of the Persian army, under their own leader.

Undoubtedly a strong government would soon reduce to proper discipline these roving hordes, and born as they are to soldiery, and inured to every hardship, they would make a valuable contingent of a duly ordered army.

The Governor had received them coldly, saying he did not understand why they had come, and that he thought he

preferred to dispense with their attentions, but that they should have a definite answer next day.

Thereupon they betook themselves to Ula. They professed to have come "in peace," to be our guests for the night, and only asked food and lodging for themselves and their horses.

They proceeded in an orderly way, applying first to the leading Mussulman inhabitant, who received some of them as his own guests, and sent the others in detachments to various other Mussulman and Christian houses in the village, billeting three, four, or five on a house.

These were at once provided with food, in some cases the tray being spread in the yard, but more often on the housetop. It was a curious and weird scene on the roofs in the brilliant light of a harvest moon just past its full, every here and there groups of these ferocious-looking, but withal highly picturesque figures, sitting greedily devouring their meal, their tawny faces illuminated by the flickering oil lamp placed in the midst of each group, while their Christian host attended to their wants with the utmost courtesy.

There is a Syrian proverb which says, "A guest who comes unasked, is without honour," but certainly this does not apply in the place of a body of armed Kurds!

It was a long time before all were accommodated; and it was noteworthy that whilst considerable difficulty was found in providing lodging for all, and much judiciously suppressed discontent was felt, yet neither Mussulman nor Christian applied to the priest to take in any guests—a request which, it is needless to say, he could not have refused.

When I remarked upon this to his son, Shamasha Gauriel, he explained that by common consent of all the inhabitants his father is always exempted from bearing a share of any misfortune that falls upon the village. This is about as signal a mark of personal regard as could well

be shown him; it speaks volumes for the old man, and I can add my testimony that he thoroughly deserves it.

One Syrian who had a party of four to entertain, came to me with many apologies, to beg a little sugar, as his guests were demanding tea, saying that "they were so used to drinking it in the evening, that if they were refused they would die before morning."

I could not help thinking that that was the best thing that could happen. But of course I gladly went down and got the sugar, only remarking in joke, "You must have great love for your guests, for you are showing them great honour!"—tea being supplied only to distinguished visitors. The reply was characteristic: "What can I do? It is from the root of my ear," *i.e.* from sheer necessity.

This morning when I went, as usual, into the gardens soon after six to say morning prayers, the unwelcome figures were everywhere apparent, climbing the trees and shaking down apricots and plums to their hearts' content—fortunately the grapes are not yet ripe. I had to stand by powerless, and see some of the ruffians rob the orchard of a poor old widow who has nothing else to depend upon. It is difficult to describe the impotent resentment one feels under such circumstances.

From all parts of the village came the sound of their loud insolent voices; and one could not but reflect with some misgiving, that however much they might have come "in peace," they were nevertheless the brethren of those who had spilt so much innocent Armenian blood, and who had murdered Mar Gauriel and his twelve companions only a few weeks before, and that our little village and its population was entirely at their mercy.

One felt, however, that there was only cause for real apprehension in the event of their receiving an unfavourable reply from the Governor, to the effect that he would have nothing to do with them; in which case it seemed only too

probable that in sheer rage they might solace themselves with a little bloodshed, or at any rate carry off from the village as lawful booty all they thought worth taking.

However, after a period of much uncertainty, towards eight o'clock they took themselves off to Diliman, to our no little relief and satisfaction, without doing us any serious harm.

It may be well to state that the Kurds are Mussulmans of the Sunni sect; hence it is that they eat the food of Christians, which the Shiahs, or ordinary Mussulmans of Persia, refuse to do, as they consider it unclean.

F. F. I.

ULA, SALMAS, *July* 28, 1896.

IN PERSIAN KURDISTAN

It may be news to some that the "land of the Kurds" extends over the Turkish border into Persia; but such is the fact, and Tergawar, which has become my home for this winter, is a high tableland in the mountainous district of Kurdistan.

The Kurds, however, on this side of the border are held in check by the brave Syrian mountaineers who live in this district, and who are supplied with rifles and ammunition by the Persian Government for the defence of the frontier. They are a manly race of hardy warriors, of very fine physique, of most gentlemanly bearing, and possessed of manners markedly polite even amongst a people to whom extreme courtesy is a natural virtue.

The reason of my being established here for the present, is the great influx of Christian refugees from Turkey, who crossed the border, their lives in their hands, during the past summer and autumn. The bulk of these descended into the villages of the Urmi plain, and vast numbers, both of Syrians and Armenians, passed on into Russia; but a

certain proportion, and these for the most part the best families of the Syrians, settled for the winter in Tergawar. These seemed to us to be the people we should specially try to help by means of the funds sent in response to our appeal in the English newspapers.

Among the fugitives are the family of the Matran. After the murder of Mar Gauriel and his companions in the summer, still entirely unavenged, things went from bad to worse in Nochea, the district of Turkey just across the border terrorised by the Sheikh Sadiq, until the Matran saw that his personal safety could only be secured by flight. Failing to find a means of entering Persia he fled to Qudshanis, where he is still the guest of the Catholicos, Mar Shimun.

Soon after his departure the attitude of the Sheikh became so threatening that the other members of the Matran's family found it necessary to flee; and they set out one day, as the sun was setting, with some six or seven hundred head of sheep, and what they could carry of their household possessions, themselves with their servants numbering about twenty souls, and after walking without rest all that night and the next day, they reached Tergawar the following evening and found shelter under the roof of Qasha Yonan, the priest of Balulan, with whom they are still staying.

It was a marvellous thing that, starting at midnight and travelling through thick snow, they all arrived in safety. The Sheikh has since sent them a message, asking them, after many greetings and compliments, why they have left his hospitable neighbourhood? That, though things may have been a little strained in the past, he is certain that, if they return, no passing cloud of ill-feeling will ever hide from them the sunshine of his protection! To which they have replied, after many expressions of love and friendship, that on the whole they will, at any rate for this winter, stay where they are.

I came up here to reconnoitre, along with Mr. Neesan, on November 12th. It was a glorious and altogether inspiring autumn day, and the journey up the steep mountain road from Urmi was most delightful.

We stayed with Koka Baijan, the Commander-in-chief of the Syrians of Tergawar, who lives in the Christian village of Mawana. He is a fine-looking man, in late middle life, with all the aspect of a veteran, noted far and wide for his bravery, and withal of most polished gentlemanly bearing. His house was built of rough-hewn stones, as are all the houses of this village, and indeed throughout the district, stones being very plentiful, and, like the rest, was only a few feet above the ground, the village being constructed on a system of excavation, the interiors being reached by long, dark, stone-lined passages. It is obvious that such a plan of construction is eminently adapted to purposes of defence, and very suitable for such a district as Tergawar.

Baijan's house, however, differed from the rest in having an "upper room," built above the *baita*—a "guest-chamber," in fact, or as it is more commonly called in these parts, a "judgment hall," from the fact that there the white-beards of the neighbourhood meet, day by day, to transact business, settle disputes, and gossip. Here he received us with a courtesy as perfect as it was unpretentious.

Around the mud-lined walls of the room hung guns, cartridge-belts, daggers, and other weapons. There was no other furniture but two narrow strips of rich carpet, woven in the district, spread along the two sides of the room, leaving a path of bare earth down the middle, on which at the upper end stood a small closed iron stove.

Two bundles of bedding were quickly produced for me and Mr. Neesan to recline against, and then the chief men of the village crowded in to kiss our hands and do us honour.

They were picturesque and striking figures, in their

loose-fitting, bright-coloured clothes, spun by their wives from their own sheep's backs, with handsome daggers stuck in their manifold girdles, and wearing the curious conical cap of white felt, like a sugar-loaf, bound around the lower part with handkerchiefs of black or coloured silk.

Whilst we were chatting and drinking tea—most of them smoking cigarettes in wooden holders more than a foot long, or pipes of a similar type—we heard a great commotion as of a crowd gathering outside the house. They said it was *tajiri*, merchants arriving from Turkey. On looking out of the window I saw crowds of poor refugees—we afterwards learnt that they numbered about one hundred and eighty souls—many with children on their backs or in their arms, all in sorry state, worn out and ready to drop. Lodging was provided for them in Mawana and other villages for the night, and next day they went on to Urmi, and thence perhaps to Russia, as thousands had done before them.

The reason for calling them “merchants,” which appeared to have lost its ironical significance and come to be used simply as the appellation of Turkish refugees, was explained as follows. Representations having been made at Constantinople to the effect that all the Turkish Christian subjects were emigrating to Persia, owing to their extreme poverty and miserable condition, and those tiresome inquisitive persons, foreign representatives, having asked the Sublime Porte for an explanation, the Sultan telegraphed to the frontier to know what such a report could mean, expressing the utmost astonishment that any subjects of his favoured kingdom could be in distress. He was, however, reassured by a telegram from the petty governors of the border provinces, solemnly declaring that the report was altogether false, that no such thing was happening—the only persons passing from Turkey to Persia were merchants with goods to dispose of!

Next morning we went to Balulan, half-an-hour's ride from Mawana, to pay our respects to the relations of the Matran. We were received with ready welcome by the Matran's father and uncle, two venerable and excellent priests who act as his advisers in all matters of importance, and his younger brother, Shamasha Yonathan, a most pleasing youth of five-and-twenty.

It was pathetic to see them in their state of dignified adversity; the combined families of the Matran and the priest Qasha Yonan—numbering over thirty souls, reckoning dependents—all crowded into the one barn-like apartment of the priest's house. Yet they behaved towards us with as much quiet ceremony as if they were entertaining us in their own spacious and well-appointed home in Nochea, setting before us delicious honey, the produce of their own far-famed hives, and other tempting delicacies. They themselves could not partake because, being Friday, they ate only dry bread till sunset. The cheerful patience with which they were bearing their misfortunes, and their really heartfelt thankfulness for their wonderful escape from the clutches of the Sheikh, could not fail to impress one deeply; and I may add that since I have had opportunity of seeing more of them and getting to know them better, that impression has only been still more deepened.

We also visited the village of Ambi, a little beyond Balulan, immediately under the mountains, where is the home of the Sarang Kurdu, the chief of the Bagzadi, or Persian Kurds, who infest this district. He and his men, acting under the direction of the Sheik Sadiq, had a hand in the murder of Mar Gauriel and his party, and some of the personal properties taken from their bodies are now in Ambi. The position of the Christians resident in Ambi, some forty families in all, is extremely difficult. They are not specially poor, but are entirely under the thumb of the Kurds, in whose raiding expeditions against other Kurdish

tribes they are often forced to take part. Again and again they have made efforts to get quit of the village, and settle elsewhere; but the Kurds at once set fire to their hayricks, on which they depend for the support of their sheep during the winter, and then send word to them that they will give them more hay if they return to Ambi, but that so long as they stay away they will damage them in every way they can. These are well known to be no idle threats, and sooner or later the Christians find it best to return.

We slept at Mawana: and that evening another band of fugitives arrived, in the charge of some Kurds whom they had paid, at the rate of about 1s. 6d. each person, to see them safely through. These Kurds also brought letters from Qudshanis for some of the leading Syrians of Tergawar. It was pretty to see Baijan, on being told that Mar Shimun had sent him "peace," rise reverently to his feet to express his thanks, and placing his hand on his right eye, swear undying loyalty to the Patriarchal house.

During the night we were disturbed by a cry without, and it appeared that Kurds had carried off the Matran's sheep, which were grazing on pastures at some little distance. Baijan at once sent a detachment of young men, armed with rifles, to scour the mountain side in pursuit of the robbers. Next morning on our way back to Urmi we met some of the party returning. They had caught no one, but said only about twenty sheep had been carried off.

A little further on we came in sight of the refugees, who, after spending the night in Mawana, had started before us for the plain. On seeing us ride somewhat fast they thought we were in pursuit of them, and in utmost terror scattered in all directions, though from the nature of the place they could not get far away, and indeed had their fears been well-founded escape would have been impossible.

When we caught them up, their delight at having us for friends quite outweighed any temporary anxiety we had

unwittingly caused them, and they implored us to go slowly that they might be with us, as they had got word that Kurds were on the road. Of course we did as they asked.

It was really a heartrending scene. We counted one hundred and twenty-three persons, without reckoning babies, all in the greatest destitution, footsore to the last degree, many moreover shoeless, with scarce enough clothing for common decency, and sadly insufficient for the sharp nights of approaching winter. Some of the children ran along bravely, and even seemed in good spirits; but some cried piteously. Mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, were burdened with swaddled little ones, slung across their backs; others had bundles containing their few remaining possessions. One boy was leading a solitary black goat by a string.

We went safely on till we reached a spot where the river is crossed close by a small fortified village inhabited by Mussulmans and Kurds. Here four Bagzadi made their appearance—fierce-looking, well-built fellows, armed to the teeth—and roughly demanded toll of the poor refugees. At first we took a high hand with them, but other Kurds appeared, watching from a little distance, evidently ready to come to their companions' assistance if needed, and we saw that it was necessary to parley. Mr. Neesan's knowledge of Kurdish was invaluable. "Are you not ashamed," he asked, "to oppress these poor people, and even under our very eyes?" They replied, "We are guards of the road, and must have our toll; but if you will give us a present we will be content." This was of course pure imposition, and only highway robbery in a polite form. We gave them six *qrans*, about half-a-crown. They took the money ungraciously, and insolently threw it on the ground at our horses' hoofs. We, however, firmly refused to give more, and after further parley they consented to accept it, but said they must also have the goat belonging to the party. This we told them was "shame" to them,

and that we would on no account allow it. Eventually they went sullenly away; and we passed on and reached Urmi without any further molestation.

As a result of our reconnoitre, I came up to settle for the winter in Tergawar on December 9th. My duties consist in looking after the interests of the Old Church throughout the district, and especially in visiting and supervising our schools in the various villages, which this year number as many as sixteen. These have to be reached on foot (when weather and Kurds permit!), and trudging through the snow I find the advantage of sandals of local manufacture, mere soles of untanned hide bound with string to the feet, which allow the muscles free play, and enable one to walk with ease, when with boots it would be quite impossible.

The weather is most delightful; not really cold, owing I suppose to the dryness of the atmosphere, except when wind sweeps down the mountains, and then it is piercing. Often at midday the sun is quite hot, and the dazzling brilliance of the vast expanse of snow is, only too literally, blinding. Words would be wasted in attempting to describe the glorious beauty of the snow-covered landscape. The surrounding Kurdish mountains, grand at any time, stand out in unapproachable majesty, "white and glistening" in the sunshine, or the only less brilliant light of the moon, verily "as no fuller on earth can white them."

The Eve of Christmas is called in these parts "the Day of Burning," from a custom which prevails in the mountains of bringing a few bundles of hay to church on that day, which are placed in the midst of the congregation, and, just before the Communion of the people, are blessed and ignited by the celebrant. The Syrians say that the shepherds of Bethlehem brought hay and made a fire to give warmth to the Blessed Mother and her Divine Child.

The congregation do not allow it to burn, but scramble for wisps of the blessed hay, which they carry off and give to their cattle.

A prettier custom, which also I think is peculiar to the mountains, I observed first at the Qurbana on Christmas Day. Just before Communion one of the assisting deacons waves towards the congregation, in the door of the sanctuary, the *shushipa*, or napkin, which till then has been wrapped around the Sacred Gifts, exclaiming, "Praise ye the living God." This is always done, and I have read somewhere that it mystically signifies the rolling away of the stone by the angel at the Resurrection. But in this district it is customary for the children in the congregation to shout with all their might, three times in response, "Praise ye the living God." It is scarcely necessary to remark that this very dramatic touch has reference to the children crying in the Temple; but it is curious that it takes place at this point and not rather at the conclusion of the Sanctus.

The number of communicants at Balulan on Christmas Day was very large, and the clanging of cymbals and jangling of bells during the solemn function of the Holy Sacrament and the Communion of the people was at times quite deafening.

Things in Nochea continue in a very unsatisfactory state, and reports of fresh outrages upon the few remaining Christians are constantly reaching us.

Thus, shortly before Christmas, I was sitting one day towards sunset with the Matran's father, when a man of that district, of some importance, named Malik Mamu, entered the *baita*. He had fled for his life; and told us that a few days before a certain Seyid, a near relative of the Sheikh, had in broad noonday shot dead a certain priest named Qasha Sarhan, who was related to the late

Qasha Dinkha, and like him a Nazarite destined for the Episcopate. He also reported another murder by the same hand, but this was subsequently contradicted. Since then two of the Matran's servants, who, with others, had remained in Nochea to look after his house and property, fled here, and reported that some eighty men of the Sheikh, headed by one of his chief servants, had made a raid upon them and carried off a large portion of the Matran's effects. And, what was worse, they told us that the Sheikh was endeavouring to make the chief Syrians of Nochea sign a statement to the effect that the author of all the oppression of the Christians in those parts was Musa Beg, a Kurdish chief, who is the open enemy of the Sheikh, and has shown the utmost kindness to the Matran and the Syrians generally throughout their troubles. It is easy to see what a two-edged sword such a document would be in the hands of the Sheikh.

Sinch then another servant has brought word of further depredations committed upon the property of the Matran, and word has also been sent to the Matran's relatives by the Sheikh in a roundabout way, to the effect that if the Matran attempts to enter Persia, not only will he be waylaid, but his house and church in Nochea will be razed to the ground, and his dependents remaining there along with other Syrians will be massacred !

Usque quo, Domine, usque quo.

F. F. I.

January 15, 1897.

CHAPTER VII

MOUNTAIN NEWS

QUDSHANIS, *Nov.* 4, 1896.

THANK you for your letter of 19th, which arrived yesterday. Ten minutes or so before your letter reached me I got one from the Van Vice-Consul mentioning that the Archbishop is dead. Mar Shimun is away in Tkhuma to get the Government tribute; but the Matran and Archdeacon Yosip (son of Shamasha Yukhanan, the Patriarch's cousin), and the monk Shamasha Dawid (tutor to Mar Shimun's nephews), came at once to express their sorrow and sympathy. Later on came Sulti herself, the Patriarch's sister, with his successor designate, Benyamin, and Mar Auraham and Shamasha Yuna, and others of the village. I was touched to hear their sympathy, and to notice how well they appreciated what the good Archbishop had been to them, although some of the ideas and expressions would sound grotesque in English.

I venture to express my sympathy with you all, my brethren, because you all have felt some of his fatherly tenderness, and that it was a pleasure to work under one who trusted us and supported us. Everybody knows his own experiences, and I might provoke contradiction if I said that circumstances had led me to know more than others how true, and just, and fair he was, and how encouraging and tender; and as I get older I am becoming more and more convinced that it is tenderness and patience

that we men most need, and that best make us able to do our duty.

If any document is written by the Chapter in connection with his Grace's going to rest (I was reproved for using the word "die" concerning him), I hereby authorise you to write my name among the signatures of my brethren.

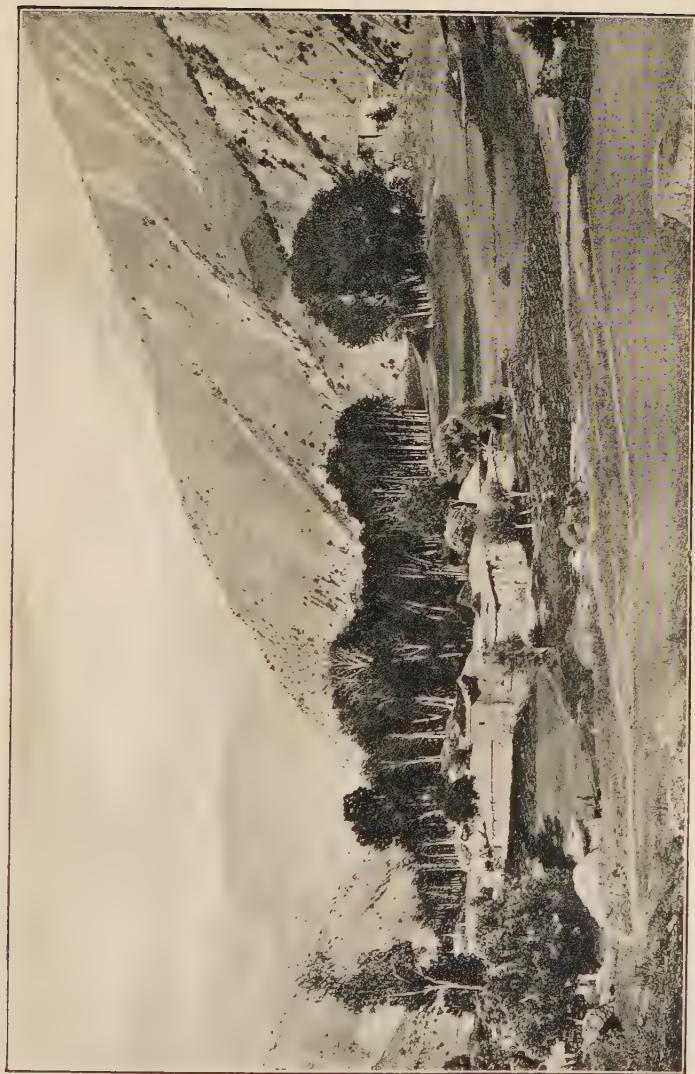
My house will be finished (the building and roofing of the lower story) on Saturday, I hope. You will remember that his Grace was very urgent as to my having some place in which to celebrate the Holy Communion for myself, and in his last letter to me he expressed his hope that I was getting on with it. Therefore (and there were other good reasons against further delay) I felt bound to set to work upon it as soon as I could get the necessary papers from the local Government. But as, through the Government "losing" the Sultan's Iradé, the season for making sun-dried bricks was past, I have had to build of carried stones throughout.

W. H. B.

THE QUDSHANIS MISSION HOUSE

In the summer of 1888 the then Vali of Van assured Messrs. Lang, Edington, and Browne, in the presence of H.B.M. Vice-Consul, Mr. Devey, that no one could interfere with the proposed building; Mar Shimun gave a piece of land, and stones were collected; but a Government official came from Julamerk and told Mar Shimun privately that he would be reckoned disaffected to the Government if he allowed the English to build in his village; and the work stopped.

In the summer of 1893 the walls were begun and raised some two feet from the ground, when Bahri Pasha, who had succeeded to the Governor generalship, spoke so threateningly to Mar Shimun, who discovered that he was being detained under surveillance at Bashkala, that he sent a request to Mr. Browne to desist.



VILLAGE OF QUDSHANIS, TURKEY IN ASIA

In March 1895, H.I.M. the Sultan, through the good offices of Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, issued an Iradé granting permission for the building of a house, provided that it was not afterwards turned into a school. This year, 1896, the Iradé could not be found amongst the Government papers at Van, and fresh application had to be made at Constantinople; and, when it was successful, local government delays postponed the time, when the building might be *again begun*, until October. Yet it was urgent that it should not be left over for another year: (1) Lest some caballing of Julamerk Kurds, or some change of circumstances, might stop the work in the spring; (2) because it would have been worse than improper to have neglected the opportunity of securing to the Mission priest in Qudshanis a place where he may celebrate the Holy Communion on Christmas Day and other holy days, instead of having to remain for months together without the Sacrament—an injury to himself and a scandal to the Syrians which has existed every year since October 1892; (3) the third and sufficient reason for proceeding with the building this autumn was the Archbishop's written desire.

The building so late has, however, falsified Mr. Browne's estimates in a way he had not foreseen. The summer's working day is some fourteen and sixteen hours long, but in October not more than eight hours could be done. The labourers' wages were thus nearly doubled. If the work had been in the summer, sun-dried bricks could have been made, and used instead of stones in a great part of the walls, except the exterior faces. They only cost about 9s. per thousand, and they can be rapidly brought and put in their places. The disturbed state of the country, and the universal fears, prevented any step being taken until the documents of the local Government were actually delivered in Qudshanis. Cereals are forty and fifty per cent. dearer than usual, and other food is also dearer. In consequence

of this Mr. Browne had to pay five Turkish pounds for feeding the masons, instead of perhaps three; and he had to pay the labourers, who fed themselves, twenty per cent. more than would probably have been necessary in an average year.

Still the fact remains that Mr. Browne has exceeded the £30 which he told the late Archbishop would suffice for the house, and the £28, 3s. of the Jervis' Memorial Fund, which was to be devoted to the Mountain Station Chapel. He confesses himself in debt to this amount, and hopes the Treasurer will give him time to see whether he is so forgotten by old friends who may read this, that they will not help him.

Two items may seem to call for apology. (1) The payment of £6 (T.) to Petros for work up to November 18th. This man, who is Mar Shimun's steward, made all the arrangements and bargains; he chose the trees, stones, &c., oversaw all the work, himself corrected the setting of stones (especially at the corners, doorways, and windows), the placing of the roof beams and rafters, and of the slabs of stone for the eaves, which prevent the water from the mud roof soaking into the walls, and washing out the mud, which is used instead of mortar, from between the stones. Certainly the building would have cost more money, would not have been straight and workmanlike, perhaps might not have been finished, if this man had not given his time, skill, energy and good sense to it. (2) The payment of one and a-half Turkish pounds as "presents." The Patriarch's nephew, and favoured successor-designate, named Beniamin, laid a cornerstone, and the Priest of the village volunteered to lay a stone as a token of fellowship in the work. The 27s. may be taken instead of the customary silver trowel.

What has been built is a large room 31 feet by 19 feet 10 inches, running east and west, and 11 feet high to the roof beams. The west wall of this is continued south to form the west wall of a room about 25 feet N. to S., by 12 feet E. to W., and 9 feet high. The large room will

be divided by a wall of boards so that the eastern part will form the chapel and vestry.

The building is of good hard stone ; the thinnest walls are 2 feet thick and some of them about 2 feet 8 inches.

As soon as Mr. Browne found that he had exceeded his funds, he thought he must do no more, but wait for directions from his Grace, or from the Chapter in Urmi. But in the end he judged, rightly or wrongly, that he was expected to secure a place in which to celebrate the Holy Communion, and he therefore is proceeding with the internal work, which is necessary. He believes that it will not cost £10 ; and towards this he has £3, given him by Mr. E. Montague Browne, of Northampton. The wall of boards must be built to avoid seeming to deceive the Government, which, till it heard of it, suspected that so large a room must be for a school.

If those who have kindly subscribed realised what opposition has been made during all these nine years, they might feel that their money has not gone for nothing in establishing, if it please God, a permanently resident Englishman in Qudshanis : the opposition had its reasons.

Again, it is not an insignificant matter that this Church of the East, isolated by its spiritual barriers as much as by its physical position, should welcome in its ecclesiastical centre, not a consulate but a house of prayer. Surely it is the response of good will to good will, if not of divine charity to the efforts of the subscribers to the Mission, which are prompted by the Holy Spirit Who is Love. People who know the miseries of hungry and ragged children will not think it bathos to add that nearly every house in Qudshanis has received wages or the price of *building materials*.

QUDSHANIS, May 14, 1898.

According to my intention some wooden steps and flooring were put into the Sanctuary, and a screen of

boards was erected for the formation of a vestry, and another to form the west wall of the Chapel. By working in the night after an unluckily-occurring Syrian Festival was finished, the invaluable and enthusiastic Petros, Mar Shimun's steward and factotum, succeeded in finishing the work for Christmas morning. Your readers, always so kind and sympathising, will easily imagine the grateful joy with which I prepared for my first celebration of the Holy Mysteries in our own Chapel, and owing to which I failed to notice the roughness of the walls of stone and mud.

In May I wrote to Urmi to ask leave to proceed with the upper story, but the answer was intercepted by a Shikak Kurd; and shortly afterwards it became impracticable to send messengers between Qudshanis and Urmi. After delaying until July for the chance of a letter or message, action had to be taken for two reasons, viz.: (1) Having obtained permission from H.I.M. the Sultan for a dwelling-house, it would have been both imprudent and untrue to have rested content with what would have seemed a Chapel with appurtenances; and (2) Mar Shimun's cousin Abner, who had been absent from Qudshanis for eleven years, was returning and would need the premises I had been occupying, which were really his. Indeed, when he settled to come, he came at such short notice, that my books, memoranda, medicines, boxes, and all my possessions had to be carried off in one day to the ground floor already built, and they were placed, some on the roof and some indoors, in a chaos which has made many things undiscoverable. My appeal having been so generously met, it was possible to build last summer not only the room I particularly asked for over the store-room, but also another room which I should like to have, so as to avoid bringing patients and over-dirty people into my sleeping room; and in my absence at Van the roofs of these two rooms were prolonged respectively westwards and southwards, so that

a sort of deep verandah was formed on the top of the southern end of the "baita." I did not accept the excuses that it would be very pleasant in summer, and that it would protect part of the west wall of the dwelling-room and the south wall of the second room ; but when winter came, and I had actual experience of a "bahugar," or snow-storm from the west, I felt in honour bound to "eat my words," and to commend Petros' forethought.

I lived in the house this winter, instead of having to inconvenience Mar Shimun's household and myself by occupying one of his rooms, and I was thus able to use the Chapel for the Daily Services and for regularly celebrating the Holy Communion. There, often, in my heart, as I now do upon paper, I have thanked the generous donors of the means, not only of putting me into a comfortable dwelling, but also of establishing what may develop into a great and blessed work.

W. H. BROWNE.

VISITORS TO QUDSHANIS

In June Captain G. S. Elliot, R.E., H.B.M. Vice-Consul at Van, cheered us by a four days' visit to Qudshanis. He very kindly took the Matran to Diza in Gawar, and the civil and military authorities escorted him safely to Persia. The Sheikh Mahmed Sadiq had constantly had men on the way from Qudshanis to Gawar, and on the Mar Bhishu road to Persia, to catch the Matran should he venture forth—notably when, some four weeks before the Consul's visit, the Government sent four decrepit zaptiehs by way of escort for him—a characteristic instance of the local way of keeping the promise to the ear. I accompanied Captain Elliot on this journey to Diza, Khumaru (the village of Musa Beg, the Kurdish chieftain who rescued the Matran from the Sheikh's siege soon after the murder of his Archdeacon), and Bash-

kala. I enjoyed the trip and Captain Elliot's kindness and Englishness very much. It was good for me, and so for the Mission, that the authorities should see me as the companion of one whom they have to honour; and the simple people are cheered by seeing an Englishman, and especially a Consul, passing through their country; they hope that they are not altogether forgotten, and they are encouraged to hope in waiting for better days.

At Van I met Lord Warkworth, M.P., and Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, M.P., brought them to Qudshanis, and went with them to Tkhuma and Tyari. They were in haste to pass through, and then early falls of snow threatened an early winter, which might prevent me returning to Qudshanis, where the late Archbishop had ordered me to reside. On this account I was not able to give so much attention to the schools as I had hoped to do when I projected this journey. On the whole, I find that the number of scholars is diminished in Tkhuma and Tyari, but the teaching seems to be more methodical than before. If it falls vexatiously short of what we had hoped it would have reached by this time, it must be remembered that the times are very troublous; that we ourselves have not been able to carry out our own part of the plan we had made; and that, after all, it is a good thing to have gained and kept a footing in the mountains for our Mission and its work for the Old Church, which is now no longer suspected, but welcomed as truly friendly, even if its not bettering the social or political condition of the people is a cause of disappointment in some degree.

The end of the year 1897 found us in much the same state of uncertainty as we were in at its beginning. We were disappointed—indeed, our hopes were very much broken, and our self-encouragement rendered largely futile and ridiculous—by the many raids and robberies and the general lawlessness, so little noticed and not at all dealt

with by governors. The irresponsible boldness of the Kurds and the outcast condition of the Syrians were brought into high relief by the burning on two occasions of Qudshanis haystacks, including some of Mar Shimun's. In former years such an insult would never have been dreamt of; and the evil of the loss of prestige and honour is far worse than the evil of the deaths of sheep and cattle through the loss of the hay. On the other hand, we were thankful that no massacre nor open attack had been made, and that the Government, though so supine as to seem but of little use for protection, was not hostile. For the higher officials professed friendship and confidence in Mar Shimun, thus confirming the belief, engendered by the Sultan's sending him a second decoration (II class Osmanieh), that no assault was intended upon his people.

THE SISTERS OF BETHANY ARE WITHDRAWN

July 1898.

It is a great grief to us that the Sisters have been withdrawn, as the community is unable to supply the place of Sisters invalided home; but we are hoping to hear shortly that the Archbishop has been able to find some other Sisterhood willing to take up the work. It is not quite easy to see why the strain of this work upon the Sisters' health should have been so great, though of course the conditions of life and work are very different from those at home. The serious illness of Sister Martha upon her return home, after seven years' work here, was very sad. We trust she is progressing favourably.

THE RUSSIAN MISSION TO URMI

I

The Russian Mission, which first arrived in May 1897, and was withdrawn in December, after enrolling the whole diocese of Sipurghan, returned on September 9, 1898. We had heard in May that the Holy Synod had received Mar Yonan into orthodox communion, and was preparing to establish a mission in Urmî. It arrived under the charge of a monk, who was accompanied by a priest, who had been a member of the Mission of the previous year, and a reader. On January 27th, after the death of this priest, the Mission was reinforced by a second monk, a deacon, and a reader. They took a house almost adjoining our Mission premises, and have occupied themselves in gradually enrolling the Syrians of the Urmî plain. Following your Grace's instructions, this Mission has acted in harmony with them, placing no obstacles in their way, but even supplying them with schools in all those villages which have joined the Orthodox Church. Our intercourse has been much facilitated by the courtesy of the Superior of the Mission, and by the presence of one of our oldest and most trusted Syrian priests among them. The Russians assert definitely that their instructions are to confine their operations to Persia, all the Syrian inhabitants of which they will almost certainly gain over, while they express their hope that the English Mission will not relax its efforts in Turkey.

II

On September 1st our connection of thirteen years with the Urmî and Sipurghan dioceses was brought to a close, and the management of the village schools passed out of our hands. The Russians eagerly made use of our

experience in organising their work, and offered employment to all our teachers on the same terms as those on which they had worked for us. By your Grace's permission we supplied books to their schools, of which there are some fifty, and have the satisfaction of knowing that there has been no appreciable break in the tradition of teaching built up by this Mission. It is not possible to speak with complete satisfaction of the present results of the Russian Mission. There is much mutual dissatisfaction, due to a failure to make a full examination on both sides of what the Syrians desired and what the Russian Church intended to do ; while the Syrian Bishop, Mar Yonan, of Sipurghan, has not been a reliable intermediary between the Syrians on the one hand and the Russian Church and missionaries on the other.

The spring was occupied by the Russians in enrolling all the villagers as members of the Orthodox Church ; but until September the management of the schools was not taken over by them. A good deal of their time was occupied in maintaining their position against the Mussulmans, who had been much exasperated by the not very discreet action of certain members of the Mission. This led to a visit of the Russian Consul-General of Tabriz in July, who at the same time tried, without success, to purchase property for the Mission. The books printed by your Grace's Mission continue to be used in their churches and schools, and there has been no change in the cordial relations between the two Missions.

Before parting with our Urmi teachers we invited them all to dinner, and made each a present as a memento of their connection with us. Needless to say regrets were loudly and strongly expressed, for they scarcely expected to receive from the Russians the same familiar care which this Mission has always shown for its agents. The Russians have not yet established a high school, or seminary for clergy, but they speak of doing so during the present year.

CHANGES OF PLAN

As soon as your Grace's determination to continue the work of the Mission was known to us, we proceeded to draw up plans for the future. The Russian Church having taken over the charge of the Urmi and Sipurghan dioceses, it was proposed that the Rev. F. N. Heazell should join the Rev. W. H. Browne in the Turkish mountains, and open work in Tyari, a district which it has been the desire of the Mission for many years to penetrate. Mr. Browne was to remain at Qudshanis, and use his influence to secure effectual support of the work from Mar Shimun. In Urmi, the only change was to be the exclusion of all boys under Russian obedience from the school. It was judged wiser to be in no haste to change the headquarters of the Mission from Urmi, where the facilities of all kinds seemed to outbalance the disadvantage of distance from the main part of our work. The press, the school, and the general management of the station were placed in charge of the Rev. O. H. Parry, while the Rev. Y. M. Neesan undertook the duty of supervising the three districts remaining to the Old Syrian Church—Salmas on the north, Tergawar on the west, Solduz on the south—and of discharging the manifold secular business by which we are brought in contact with the Syrians.

TYARI

Tyari is a well-cultivated ravine among the rugged Kurdish hills, stretching southward, some three days' ride from Qudshanis in the direction of Mosul. Here among its wild and warlike inhabitants, all Syrians, who spurn the Turkish yoke and still retain more than semi-independence, Mr. Heazell has just launched out on a venture of faith which has long been contemplated and is now being put

to the test. His hope is to begin something, in quite a small way at first, of the nature of a Theological School for deacons and priests of those parts, who at present are wont to be better skilled with the gun and dagger than in wielding the pen or reading their Old Syriac treatises, for which, however, they have all the reverence that is apt to gather round the unknown.

Extract from an account of the entrance of our Mission into Tyari, written in "a most beautiful pen" by Mr. Heazell's scribe.

After the destruction of Tyari and Tkhuma by the Kurdish chieftain Bedr Khan Beg, and the flight of the Patriarch to Mosul to the protection of the English Vice-Consul, Mr. Rassam, a consultation took place between the deceased Mar Auraham, and the present Patriarch's father Benjamin, and all the *maliks* (petty chieftains) of the Syrians, which resulted in a letter being sent to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury asking for English Missionaries.

This was in the year 1843; and now after more than fifty years their desire has been fulfilled, in the sending of the Rev. Rabbi Mr. Browne and the Rev. Rabbi Mr. Heazell to Kurdistan.

Mr. Heazell started from Urmi in the month of September; and he arrived here, after a month's sojourn at Qudshanis, in the sweet companionship of Mr. Browne, having encountered many vicissitudes on the road (the Lord reward him for all his love of this poor nation!) in the end of the month of October.

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Two things greatly astonished our nation.

First, the courage under trials of these two reverend apostles; some men say, "We have never seen among Europeans such men as these before."

Secondly, a matter which to me was still more "lord of wonder," that they ate quite common and despised food without murmuring. The best article of diet they could get on the journey was boiled potatoes, the only bread to be had was made of millet baked in smoke. Yet they appeared to eat it with so much relish as if it had been English plum cake.

Then Rabbi Mr. Browne returned to Qudshanis to see to his own business ; and Mr. Heazell began to arrange a deacons' school for the whole nation.¹ At the beginning of December there were ten scholars—six of them deacons between the ages of fifteen and thirty, and four unordained.

Thanks be to Rabbi Mr. Heazell, and also to his interpreter who helps him to teach the various subjects, which are the Liturgy and the Book of Genesis in the old language, Geography, Arithmetic, Turkish (for Government purposes), St Luke's Gospel (in the vernacular), Syriac Grammar, Catechism, and Writing.

Moreover, I the lowly monk Werda, his unworthy pupil, add my poor testimony to the self-denial and zeal of Rabbi Mr. Heazell.

RABBAN WERDA, of the village of Mazraa in the country of Tkhuma.

Mr. Heazell's Diary tells of high passes and steep descents ; of a dangerous road by the river Zab, cut out of the face of the rock ; of a robber who attacked Mr. Browne, demanding his money, and of some mountaineers taking the man by his arms and legs and dropping him over a wall ; of missing one band of armed men sent by a disaffected *Malik* to stop them, but being taken prisoners a few days later in spite of a strong escort. This opposition was stirred up and calumnies spread by an intriguing cousin and enemy of Mar Shimun.

¹ An Eastern way of putting it !—(Ed.)

LETTER FROM THE REV. F. N. HEAZELL

I am glad to say that I was able to open my deacons' school at the beginning of December. It took me some considerable time to collect my little band of scholars. For it was surprising how suspicious people were of us English clergy. The report had somehow got about that we were just like the American Presbyterian Mission; that our English Church had no bishops; that we did not keep the fasts; and that we had no *Qurbana* (Holy Eucharist). Only a few days ago, when I have now been here many months, in conversation with me a man of this valley expressed great surprise when mention was made of our bishops! Of course if these charges were true the people had every reason to be suspicious; they have a great dislike to anything new in the matter of religion, but once show them that we believe in the succession of the Sacred Ministry as they have received it from their fathers, and that we are pledged to respect their ecclesiastical traditions, and friendly relationship is quickly established. All this opposition I had to live down.

I opened school with eleven boys, or rather men, for all save one have attained to manhood. It is a picturesque sight to see them all sitting on the floor in a circle around me. Their clothes are of bright colours, and adorned in many places with a variety of red and blue patches. They wear tall conical hats (ten inches high, of the sugar-loaf pattern) and two pigtailed! All have the dagger in the waist-belt. We read a variety of subjects, but of course Holy Scripture and their own church books receive the most attention. I have insisted on all learning a doctrinal catechism printed at the Urmi Press; this has proved a sad bone of contention between us. Time after time, first one boy has come, and then another, with this request, "Please,

Rabbi, will you take away the catechism from us ; we can't learn it at all." Another time the whole class came, and having made one the chief speaker, begged I would do mercy on them and take away the catechism ; "they could not learn by heart," they said, "for they were not little boys." I was obdurate, and told them that inasmuch as they were not little boys they must not behave as such ; that if they did not wish to learn the catechism they could go to their homes. That was in their eyes an awful threat, for they dread being sent away, knowing, as they do, very well that there are many to take their places. The result is, there have been no more complaints, and now all the boys can repeat some twenty pages of the catechism by heart without a mistake.

The house which I occupy in Salabeqan belongs to Malik Berkhu, and he very kindly placed it at my disposal for this winter. It contains four rooms, two on the ground floor and two above. Of the ground floor rooms, one is a bedroom for boys, and the other is a kitchen ; while "one pair right" (as the college porters say) is my sitting room, the corresponding room on the left being a store room for food. My own sitting room, which is also my bedroom, serves as chapel, schoolroom, and dispensary in turns.

The new effort of the mission in Tyari was spoken of in the January *Quarterly* as a "venture of faith"; it was certainly that. When I came down here last autumn I knew nothing of the country or its people. I want to say here that our venture of faith has been abundantly blest. Is not this what we ought to expect? Where work and prayer go hand in hand God never altogether withholds His blessing. I know many at home have been praying for us. When I think of those seventy associates of A.A.M. in my old parish of St. Michael's, Croydon, praying daily for this Mission, I begin to realise how it is things in this crooked country have sped so smoothly. My boys are quite delight-

ful; it has been a real pleasure to teach them. They certainly "pay" for teaching and can readily be influenced.

But apart from the school the presence of an English priest here has had a good effect. It has secured for us the friendship of many in this and other valleys. Men here know now the aims and objects of the Archbishop's Mission as they did not know them before. I think we have lived down suspicion and got over misunderstanding—that is no slight thing accomplished in a country like this.

F. N. H.

March 1900.

"THE ILLS THAT FLESH IS HEIR TO"

"Where is the Qasha? I want medicine."

This familiar sound ascends my staircase at all hours of the day. The question is addressed to Dinkha, my servant, who lives in a dark hole at the foot of the precipitous stone staircase which leads to my room. It is his business to prevent people entering into my august presence during school hours; for, as my room is not blessed with a door, Dinkha is my barricade against the daily siege of patients ever threatening me.

It must be borne in mind that, to an Eastern, time is by no means of the importance it is, at least conventionally, reckoned in the West, and it is absolutely essential not to allow our routine work to be disorganised by the inroad of persons who choose to come at their own convenience, instead of at the time appointed.

"Tell the Qasha I'm in a hurry, and must reach my home before sunset, and it is now midday."

"Good," replies Dinkha. "Rabbi is teaching now; when lessons are finished he will say prayers, then he will eat luncheon, and after that he will see you."

This sort of dialogue we constantly hear as we sit

reading together, and it not infrequently sends a ripple round the class as we catch the unsympathetic replies of the imperturbable Dinkha to those demanding *immediate* attention. At the appointed time, patients are admitted one by one. We will take a few typical cases in the course of a few weeks.

Case No. 1.—An old woman with a simple complaint, which she expounds at great length. I prescribe, and give two medicines neatly wrapped up in different coloured papers to avoid the possibility of a mistake. Then I give careful instructions, repeating the same three times, as to *how* and when the medicines are to be taken. "Do you understand?" I inquire. "Yes, I understand quite well," she replies. Then she kisses my hand, and with many polite speeches—such as, "GOD increase your wealth," "May GOD give you the Kingdom of Heaven"—she departs.

But I find to my sorrow I have not finished with her, for in less than five minutes she returns.

"Did you say, Rabbi, I was to eat the paper as well as the medicine?"

"No, medicine only."

"One other thing I will ask, Rabbi."

"Well, what is it?"

"My grandchild is ill with a bad cough; will this medicine do for her too?"

"No, no; it is for you only."

"Thank you, Rabbi. May GOD increase your wealth! But did you say I was to eat the blue paper or the white paper?"

My patience is becoming exhausted, and I hurriedly dismiss her "in peace."

Case No. 2.—A young man enters.

"Well! What do you want?"

"Nothing, Rabbi."

"Nothing ! then why have you come ?"

"I want medicine, but I shame to ask."

"Tell me what you want."

"My heart is ill." (Syrians use "heart" for "stomach.")

"Put out your tongue."

"No, Rabbi, it is not my tongue that is bad, but my heart"—beating his chest energetically by way of demonstration.

"Put out your tongue. Don't you know I want to find out the cause of your illness first, before I can give you medicine ?"

"There is no cause, Rabbi ; it is only my heart."

I begin to think there is something lacking in the upper story, so I give two harmless pills, and tell him too to go "in peace."

Case No. 3.—A married lady of about fourteen years ; complains of rheumatism in all her limbs ; has suffered for the last twenty years.

"Twenty years !" I exclaim ; "why, you are not twenty years old."

"Indeed I am, Rabbi, much more than twenty years."

"How old are you ?"

"Thirty-five, perhaps forty"—so vague are they as to age.

This was so hopelessly a mis-statement that I called the mother-in-law, who was waiting below. This estimable relative, who is held in the highest honour in this country, said the girl was certainly not more than sixteen years, perhaps only fourteen.

This was negative evidence against rheumatism, but what was the real complaint ?

Case No. 4.—A middle-aged man.

"What is the matter with you ?"

"I hardly know ; I have been ill a long time."

"Tell me about it."

"It is like this, Rabbi : when it is cloudy weather I

have pains in my back, when it is raining I have pains in my side, when it is full moon I can't eat at all."

"Stuff and nonsense! You had better go down; I have no medicine for those sorts of complaints."

"But indeed, Rabbi, I am very ill, and I ask you to have pity on me, and give me medicine."

Then it struck me that the man was only marking time with this nonsense until he could speak to me alone, so I sent my servant out of the room. Then he told me he was suffering from a skin disease.

"But why did you tell me all that rubbish about the moon?"

"I shamed, Rabbi, to speak before another man."

Case No. 5.—A woman with her head and face swathed in folds of wondrous hue; a volume of groans heralds her approach; evidently a case of toothache.

"Have you toothache?"

"Yes, Rabbi; please take one out."

She sits down in my operating chair—the floor.

"Open your mouth. Which one is it?"

"I don't know, Rabbi; *you* know better than I do."

By a careful examination and a diligent tapping we come to the conclusion there is something wrong with a "lower molar right."

"Shall I take it out?"

"Yes, please, quickly."

I produce my forceps from my cassock sleeve, but her heart fails her. She seizes my hand violently and cries out, "No, not to-day, another day; it has stopped aching now." I sympathise with that lady, and wish her good morning. For in England we all know what wonders are wrought on a patient suffering from toothache, the instant the hand is applied to the dentist's front door bell, or at the sight of the operator's instrument!

F. N. H.

AMADIA

When the Deacons' School in Tyari had dispersed, I set out for Amadia on another tour of inspection. Amadia is two days' journey south of Tyari. After passing through Châl and crossing the Zab, one leaves the Ashirets behind, to discover a very different type of Syrian character. Our schools are to be found in the villages around Amadia and not in the town itself, although it now contains a large number of Syrians. Here I met with the greatest kindness from the people, who asked why it was that they so rarely received visits from the English clergy. There were some, too, who remembered Canon Maclean visiting the town many years ago.

There was originally a Syrian church here; it stood in a yard common to both Christian church and Jewish synagogue. Now nothing remains but the chancel arch to mark the home of Christian worship, while the Jewish synagogue still stands firm, and the minaret of the mosque towers up a hundred feet hard by. Numbers of Syrians came to see me during my stay in Amadia, and many and bitter were the complaints of Mar Shimun's neglect of their spiritual welfare. I saw that they little understood Mar Shimun's difficulty in sending them even a messenger, much less in paying them a pastoral visit himself. My journey was interpreted as a sign of renewed interest from Qudshanis in their welfare. I was asked both here and in Alqosh to represent to your Grace how much the Syrians hoped for an English priest to live and work amongst them. It was in Amadia that I met one of the few remaining Nestorian bishops, Mar Ishu of Duri, who pleaded earnestly for support both from our Mission and also from Mar Shimun. He said that unless some further help were forthcoming they could not stand against the

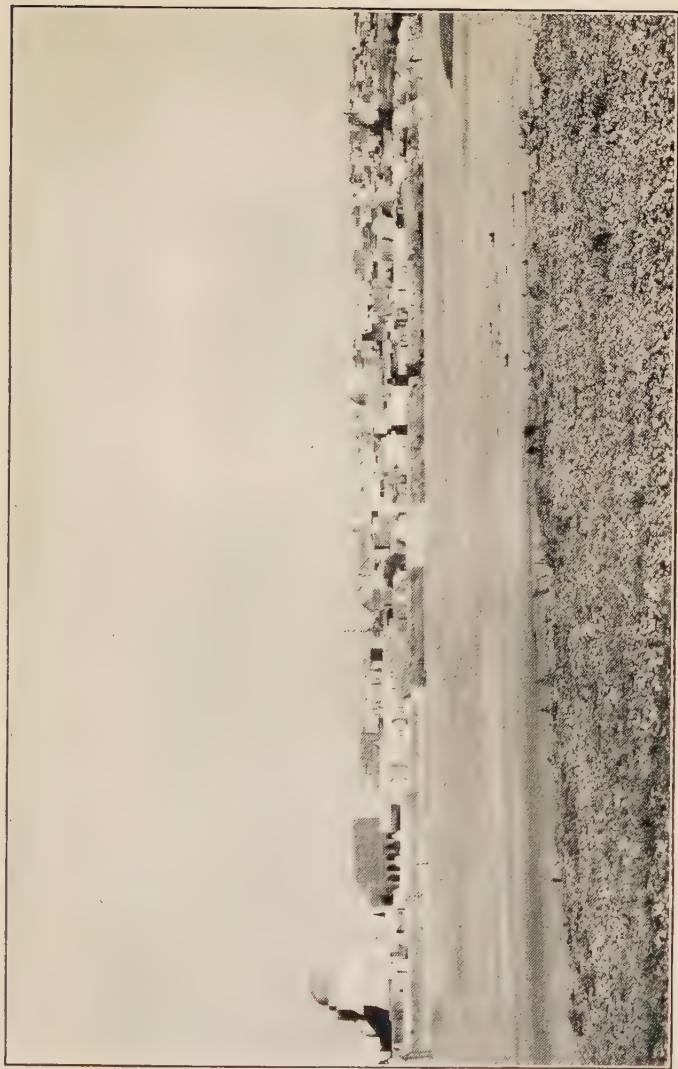
persistent efforts of the Dominican missionaries from Mosul.

After leaving Amadia I went to Alqosh and Mosul. The road lay through many Syrian villages, which at one time owed allegiance to Mar Shimun; but now they have all, save a small number, joined the Latin Obedience and are known as Uniat Chaldeans. In Alqosh I saw signs of a great educational work being done by the Dominicans; the Syrians there seemed more prosperous and better cared for, though I heard not a few complaints from priests who were dissatisfied with their new ecclesiastical rulers, and much more so with the Liturgy which had been imposed on them.

Mosul has long since passed out of the hands of Mar Shimun's predecessors—there one met with the Jacobites. I must say that as I sat and talked with the amiable Mafrian, Mar Dionysius, one felt what a blessing it would be if a great Syrian Church could rise up out of the ruins of Nestorianism and Monophysitism.

F. N. H.

September 1902.



MOSUL AND THE TIGRIS

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAMILY OF MAR SHIMUN

MAR SHIMUN'S condition, his poverty, broken health, and broken power filled us with pity, all the more from contrast to the reverence with which he is regarded. The Russian schism leaves him few adherents in Persia, though there are signs of repentance amongst them. And we were glad to find one priest at Urmi retaining his picturesque cloak "because he had been ordained by Mar Shimun." This man had joined the Russian Church, but his wife could not be induced to give up the Old Church, and now her husband has come back to her way of thinking. One of Mar Shimun's kinsmen—he suffers from more than one family of turbulent cousins who intrigue against him, declare themselves now as "his men" when with him, now as his representatives so as to intercept his small revenues, now are openly against him—had lately done much mischief, traitorously causing disturbance and bringing down Turkish soldiers on a mountain village, and giving out amongst other falsehoods that the Patriarch was making overtures to the Russian Mission. This man has next the impudence to present himself as a friend before the Patriarch, and instead of being turned out neck and crop he is allowed to come out and in.

Mar Shimun's greatest pleasure must lie in the fine family of nieces and nephews left by his brother Ishai. The eldest, Surma, is a girl of unusual goodness and strength of character, and will be a great support to her brother Ben-

yamin when he is Patriarch. Already the people are clamouring to have him openly nominated successor, and there would be nothing unusual in this, in spite of his youth. Across the mountains, at Jîlu, there is now a little bishop of thirteen years who is vigorously putting down the abuses rife in his old uncle and predecessor's time, and who is regarded with much affection mingled with outspoken warnings by his flock.

Benyamin is aged fourteen but looks grown up ; he is thoughtful and full of character.

The youngest of the six beautiful boys, Ishaiah, aged six, is a fascinating little person with great, dark, expressive eyes, a finely formed mouth and chin, and any amount of character ; he dominates the twins next above him, and the red fezzes of these sturdy little fellows are generally to be seen bobbing about near each other. On our return from a visit to a famous church, Mar Giwergis, beyond Julamerk, we overtook a ragged boy and found he was an orphan who had been taken care of for some years and then turned loose on the world ; if not the world, at least the Church received him kindly, for two days later we saw him helping move bedding, &c., from the roof of the Patriarch's library, my little friend, Ishaiah, on very friendly terms, sliding down the ladder after him. All the boys are courteous and kindly to strangers.

Now many will wish for detailed information about Mr. Browne. I had heard so much of broken health, old age, and so on, that I was delighted to find him very little changed since we met at Canterbury ten years since—of course somewhat aged ; he was not so very young when he went out, and long hair if picturesque and reverend does not make for youthfulness of appearance ; then he is delicate, but he takes care of himself, and his assertion that though he gets bronchitis in a Qudshanis winter it would be worse in England is reasonable. In other respects, he

is the same or more so—faithful to his own Church and friends, yet anything but lonely or unhappy, devoted to his Syrian friends, by no means blind to their faults, advising and rebuking freely, and lamenting the mad dissensions which weaken them from within in a yet more regrettable manner than encroachments and onslaughts from without, kindly, helpful in many ways, unselfish, and so bright, cheerful, and humorous that he reminded me constantly of the dictum of a dear Irish friend “that no one can be thoroughly delightful without being Irish” ! Then his house—a substantial, comfortable building of several rooms and having a ladder staircase of his own design which is astonishingly easy to walk up ; this is a remarkable feature, and a contrast to usual Syrian stairs and ladders. The *bé'lai* pleased me greatly ; it is a half-out-of-door room or broad-roofed balcony. Here one can sit at ease on the floor under shade by day, or sleep when moonlight rises above the grand rock walls and wake at dawn to see Chella and Beri Chella flushed with red light. But the chapel is the best, on the ground floor ; the rocky, wooded cliffs rise so high that they half fill the view from the narrow windows. It is small and plain but well built and orderly and of unusual proportion, for, having built the chancel on a good scale, Mr. Browne thought the whole would be too large and walled off nearly all the west end, thus forming a dispensary through which the chapel is approached : here is a piece of practical Christian symbolism ! I was allowed to be present here and to be introduced to the varying line of patients, and liked to see the confidence with which red-garbed children looked up towards their kind friend. The impression of this cool, quiet room, with its contrast to the brilliant sunshine outside, lingers with abiding pleasantness in the memory.

J. P. M.

DISCIPLINE

All signs of returning spiritual discipline must be interesting and grateful to the A.A.M., which acts the part both of the relatives and of the nurses of the sufferer. "Let them open the Sunhadus" (*i.e.* "Let them hold a solemn court and refer to the Canon Law") is a very familiar cry here, but I do not remember this being done till a few days ago. Disputes as to property have been decided according to Canon Law, and offenders are sometimes punished as it directs, and last year a most important and surprising sentence was pronounced upon reference to the book of the Canons. But lately two bigamists, who had been emboldened to commit their crime by the impunity of former offenders, were tried by a court of three archdeacons, two priests, the rabban Dawid, Benyamin, Mar Shimun's nephew and probable successor, and some of Mar Shimun's cousins, who had at first protected one of the criminals, but now are professing eager Churchmanship. It was found that both the men and women and any who should harbour them must be cast out of the Church; and Mar Shimun confirmed the finding, as well as another sentence of fasting and subsequent restoration by public absolution, which was passed on another offender against marriage law. The two men and their two women have had to leave the village; and probably any Syrian village which gives them shelter will be obliged to withdraw it.

A more effective punishment would have been to separate the couples, but Mar Shimun was prevented from any action outside the Canons by circumstances. At the least the result will be that intending bigamists will fear, even when they have powerful supporters, and that "the opening of the Sunhadus" is found to have a real meaning. For this revival, and for the loyal adherence to the law as it

stands, we are chiefly indebted to Benyamin and his sister Surma, and to Qasha Ishu; they could accomplish, and that quickly and from inside the community, what I, acting as a foreigner, might not have been able to effect till late, if at all.

I feel sure that the readers of the *Quarterly* paper remember and pray for the boy bishop of Jîlu; and I ought to confess, though I do not like doing it, that one's anxiety for him is somewhat increased. Called in his innocence to the high office of bishop, he might by grace have lived up to his vocation; but one fears lest he may rather act as was "naturally to be expected." It seems as if the pressure of poverty and the necessity of providing for his household led him to acquire money in ways that were on a level much below the aspirations he professed last year. Persons who are not old bachelors like me, will say that this is not wonderful and is nothing to make a talk about. Well, but it is something to pray about. It is a great thing for a boy in power to have lofty ideals, and intentions of clinging to what is right in spite of evil influence and bad example. It is a great thing if a young bishop—and he could not have become a bishop in his youth, if GOD had not permitted others to make him one—be preserved in his integrity and unspotted by the world. A really good bishop, and one who trusted to GOD to build his house up, if He pleased, and who was far from covetousness and from crooked ways, would be a priceless treasure here. And it would be very sad if this little bishop, who did begin to run well, and who is just beginning to feel the stress of the common temptation in a society where *quocumque modo, rem*, is a motto of virtue, not of shame, should disappoint our hopes—hopes which, if not worldly wise, have a basis on GOD'S faithfulness.

When the little Bishop of Jîlu was in Qudshanis in the winter, Petros, Mar Shimun's trusty retainer, who acts as a

sort of nursery governess to the younger members of the patriarchal household, thought he would supplement the dry lessons of his Rabbi by a course of St. Matthew, translated and accompanied by a practical commentary. On the "right eye" the commentary was, "That is you, little Father. You are one of the eyes of the people—the right eye of us mountaineers; and if you do not become learned, and also virtuous, and an upholder of the faith and laws of Christ, we shall pluck you out and cast you from us. It is better to go into the kingdom of heaven without you than to go to hell with you."

On another occasion: "The ox is you, Bishop." "What! you do not call me a bull?" "Yes I do—you are Christ's bull. Nay, you are Christ's buffalo—much better than a bull; and you must plough for Christ and tread out His corn, that He may gather in the good grain; and He Himself will tend you and take care of you, and feed you, and bathe you, and cherish you in the stable of Paradise."

W. H. B.

THE CONSECRATION OF BENYAMIN TO THE EPISCOPATE

Visitors to Qudshanis in past years would have failed to recognise it on Sunday, March 15th, 1903, as the quiet little village of the Patriarch's residence. The place was full of strangers, gathered from every Assyrian village round about. There were wild-looking men from Tkhuma with cadaverous faces, dressed in their best clothes and armed with sword and shield; there were Tyarii, merry and light-hearted, in gaily embroidered coats, and feathers in their tall conical hats. One felt the pulse of the whole nation beating like that of one man; for the moment old quarrels and jealousies were forgotten. Nearly every district had sent its representatives to the Patriarch's house for this great event, and

men told with pride, how that last night 462 men sat down to supper in the spacious *baitas*. And what was the event? The consecration of Benjamin, Mar Shimun's nephew, to the office of Bishop, and his investiture with the rank of Metropolitan. Two causes have been at work. First, Mar Shimun's weak state of health, rendering it impossible for him to travel about for ordinations and the consecration of churches, made everyone see that another bishop was absolutely necessary; secondly, the opposition of Nimrod, Mar Shimun's cousin, who has been trying for years to secure the succession for his own house, left the nation in a continual state of suspense until the matter was decided. During the last few years the people have many times urged Mar Shimun to consecrate his successor. It is, unfortunately, no new custom with the East Syrians. Mar Shimun himself, when little more than a lad, was consecrated bishop, in the lifetime of his uncle, the then Patriarch. It is a grave abuse, but when family interests are at stake it is a very difficult matter to upset a bad tradition. To-day Mar Shimun's action in consecrating Benjamin met with the hearty good-will of the nation. In theory the Patriarch's successor is always the eldest son of the Patriarch's brother; but the "natir kursi," as he is called, can only succeed to the throne with the good-will of the people. This practically means, with the consent of the two strongest tribes—Tkhuma and Tyari. Thus it will be seen that the Patriarch *selects* his successor from his household, while the nation *elects* him to fill the office and calls upon the Patriarch to consecrate him. The "milat" (nation) then, assembled in large numbers, to signify their acceptance of the Patriarch's nominee, and to witness his consecration. To-day not only is there no opposition, but Nimrod was not in Qudshanis at the time, so the people give themselves over to rejoicing without even a crooked word from the opposite faction.

At 4.30 A.M. we wended our way through the snow to the Church of Mar Shalita, where the consecration was to take place. On entering the church we found some thirty or forty people assembled in the nave, and that the service of ordination had already commenced in the sanctuary. I passed into the baptistery, which is a sort of chapel on the south side of the sanctuary, and serves as a vestry. The sanctuary was lighted by two candles placed on the altar, which dimly disclosed a group of figures just inside the sanctuary arch. Here sat Mar Shimun in a large wooden chair, facing the altar; he was clad in his ordinary clothes, with the addition of a *ma'apra*, a large sheet-like vestment worn by the priest or bishop when celebrating the Holy Eucharist, thrown loosely over his shoulder; he wore a fez on his head. Before him, with their backs to the altar, stood two priests, vested in albs; each held a lighted taper in his right hand and bent low over the manuscript ordinal from which Mar Shimun was reading in an almost inaudible voice at a very rapid rate. The ordinand stood behind the consecrator, a little to his right. He was first ordained deacon and priest as well as admitted to all the minor orders, as the East Syrians receive them. They group them as follows; Reader, Sub-deacon, Deacon; Priest, Chorepiscopus, Archdeacon; Bishop, Matran, Patriarch.

The service of consecration to-day lasted an hour and a half, and was followed by Qurbana, which with the communion of the great number who were present, further lengthened the service by about two hours. The whole rite was keenly followed with noisy interest by the closely packed crowd, which filled the nave. The congregation talked throughout much above a whisper, and I constantly heard the inquiry, "Where have they got to now?" At times the noise of voices so increased that it drowned the voice of the consecrator, who, nothing daunted, went apace like a mill-stream. After Benyamin's ordination to the

diaconate the time had come for giving the tonsure. The ordinand was conducted to the baptistery, while Mar Shimun called out loudly for a knife or scissors—then others took up the cry. Finally Surma's scissors were produced, Mar Shimun clipped locks of hair from the head in four places in the sign of a cross, and the service proceeded again in the Sanctuary.

It is a strange fact that although the word *siamîdha* (literally "laying on of hands") is used in Syriac to describe all ordinations of whatever degree, in practice the Syrians make so light of the actual laying on of hands, when administering Sacred Orders. To-day I saw the whole of the administration, from admission to the diaconate up to "ordination" as Matran, and not once did Mar Shimun lay his hand on the head of the ordinand. For admission to deacon's orders, the Patriarch grasped the candidate by the right hand when the "form" was recited; for the office of bishop, the candidate was led up higher into the Sanctuary, the Gospel and the Staff of Office were delivered to him, and at the actual point of consecration, Mar Shimun slightly raised his hand in the direction of the bishop-elect. The only time when the consecrator actually touched the ordinand on the head was when, standing up after he had made the investiture to the office of Matran, or Metropolitan, he anointed the newly-made bishop with the "oil of the horn."

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The "ordination" of a Matran with right of succession to the Patriarch is the rallying point of loyalty. It is to the Syrians what the crowning of our King is to us—for the Patriarch is both a civil and ecclesiastical ruler, and as such is recognised by the Porte.

If our readers are interested in what has been written above, may I ask them to extend their interest a little more and from time to time remember Mar Benyamin in their

prayers. He is a bright, upright, intelligent boy, not yet eighteen. Though not much given to books he has lately commenced to read theology with Mr. Browne, and has made much progress. We ourselves, though not liking this consecration of a boy so young and inexperienced, can yet see that it may be a great blessing to the nation and bring about many much-needed reforms. Already he has given earnest of great things, and hope is again kindled in many hearts.

F. N. H.

March 15th, 1903.

THE LATE CATHOLICOS

With heavy pen and sad heart must it be written that Mar Shimun's long illness terminated fatally a few minutes before midnight on Sunday, March 29th, 1903. In November, 1901, he had been thrown from his mule as he returned from a visit of duty to the local governor at Julamerk, and though no bones were broken, he became an invalid, and grew worse and worse, until, in the spring of 1902, Hakim Oshana Khan was sent to his aid by the Chapter in Urmi, and he, by the mercy of GOD, was able at that time, and on three subsequent occasions, to save him from imminent danger of death, and bring him into a condition in which a very slight knowledge of medicine was sufficient to preserve him in comparative health throughout the summer.

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On the last day of January Mar Shimun resolved to yield to the demand for the consecration of his nephew, Benyamin, to be Bishop and Metropolitan, which the Ashirets had been making for the last two years. He had not listened to them when they urged that it was the custom of his predecessors to try to settle the succession by conse-

crating to the Metropolitanate the candidate of his own and the people's choice, and that it would silence or enfeeble the cousins and their faction. But now that he was unable to go to church—for his going to the Holy Eucharist on the Eastern Christmas Day had resulted in an injurious attack of bronchitis—and now that there was no one to perform episcopal functions, now Mar Shimun felt that a real necessity had arisen.

On Sunday, March 15th, he ordained him sub-deacon and all ranks up to that of Metropolitan, resting a good deal in a chair in the Sanctuary. After that he sat by the fire in Rabban Yonan's old cell in the court of the church until near the time of giving Communion, when he went into church, received the Holy Sacrament, and returned to the cell till the end of the service, when all went up to the house in procession; and though Mar Shimun had gone through all this fatigue (he had a cup of tea in the cell after his Communion) and held levées during the day, his pulse was in a fairly strong state, and he thought himself very well. But on Friday, March 27th, the ascent of four steps seemed to be the cause of a stroke of paralysis from over-exertion, and on Sunday he could neither speak nor swallow, nor indeed was he conscious until a moment or two before his death, when he seemed to desire to be raised into a sitting posture, and, as he called—as so often he used to in these later years—upon our Lord, he gave forth his last breath.

Thus passed away the hundred and thirty-seventh (as it is said) Catholicos of the East, and the thirteenth of those who have resided in Qudshanis, a loyal and faithful friend, as I have good reason gratefully to acknowledge in my own person and as a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, affectionate to an extreme degree to his brother, sister, and the children of the former, and allowing his natural affection for his cousins, together with his

kindly and forgiving disposition, to hinder the administration of rebuke and discipline which were required.

But too much has been made of Mar Shimun's indecision, want of vigour, and changes of mind. Perhaps hardly anyone who has not had actual experience of it can realise what it is to be blocked in on every side and to see fresh dangers threaten at every step taken. One course of action is impossible on account of the opposition of the Government, another will rouse the Kurds to fury, a third will alienate the Syrians and make them uncontrollable, while a fourth will provoke the members of the household; yet no one course is so obviously the right one that it ought to be followed at all costs. On the other hand, to sit still and do nothing has the fallacious comfort that it precipitates nothing and may delay the impending disaster, or give time for "something to turn up."

There were occasions on which the late prelate acted with quick decision and persevering vigour to the dismay of governors and others, whose dismissal he obtained by representations made to the Sultan or the Vali, and of his own chieftains, &c., whom he summarily deprived of their ill-used dignities. He remained some nine months in Julamerk—he who could not bear to be away from home—to secure the release of Tyari men, who had been falsely convicted. He lived in a poor room amid much discomfort of body and mind, and persevered in spite of the dismissal of officials who were friendly to him. Afraid to leave the seat of local government, he celebrated his Communion on a rock on the hillside at Eastertide and other great festivals. Guns were discharged outside his residence at night and alarms of thieves were made, in the hope of frightening him away from his post. Commissioners, sent to examine into the conviction, sent in false reports, and Mar Shimun obtained new commissioners from the Sultan until the innocent were released.

If it be impossible to live in this country without criticising some of the officials who represent, or misrepresent, the Government, Mar Shimun was honestly loyal to the Sultan ; and this loyalty and his sound common-sense preserved him from yielding to tempting schemes, which promised greatness and freedom, *e.g.* when Sheikh Obeidullah of Neri invited his co-operation in rebellion. It is understood that it was to mark his appreciation of his Beatitude's behaviour and services that the Sultan decorated him with the order of Osmanieh, in addition to that of the Mejidieh, which he had received a couple of years after his consecration. The deceased prelate was a warm admirer of Queen Victoria and of the English nation, kept alive the memory of our procuring the exile of Bedr Khan Beg and the Mira (Emir) of Hakkiari, and of our recovering so many of the Syrian children who had been carried captives to distant regions.

W. H. B.

March 15th, 1903.—Mar Shimun consecrated his nephew Benjamin Bishop and Metropolitan, thus indicating him as his successor.

March 29th.—Mar Shimun died.

April 10th.—Mar Khnanishu, Metropolitan, arrived at Qudshanis from Shamsdin.

April 12th.—Mar Khnanishu consecrated Mar Benjamin Catholicos.

NEW HEADQUARTERS

It has been decided by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Committee of the Assyrian Mission that the headquarters of the Mission should now be in Turkey, whence the appeal first came, and that the Persian work should be given over to the Russians, except in those cases where the help of the English Mission is still asked.

VAN CITY

Van lies some 1500 feet higher than Urmi, and 5600 feet above the sea: the summer is therefore shorter and cooler than at Urmi, and we enjoyed the loveliness of innumerable orchards and budding elms and poplar trees. The tulip and narcissus abound, a glorious mixture of snow and blood, no unsuitable symbol of the country of mountain and massacre. The houses are most absurdly unsuitable to the climate, the windows almost exceeding the remaining wall space; but we were surprised by the contrast with Urmi, where all the streets are faced by dead mud walls. Scarcely any burnt bricks are used, as the earth used for building is of unusually durable consistency for building.

Of the various religious agencies, the Armenians claim the first place in interest, with their history of two thousand five hundred years, and their unrivalled energy and national patriotism. The American Mission is extremely impressive, and it would be impertinent to praise the admirably organised industrial orphanage carried on under Dr. and Mrs. Raynolds' charge. There is a large orphanage for girls under the charge of a German lady, and a splendid new hospital under Dr. Ussher. No praise would be excessive for the practical self-denying energy to which all these works bear witness. The Dominicans also have a considerable establishment in Van, but we were not able to do more than receive and return calls, as charming as such always are with cultivated French regulars.

The Vali is a man of high character for justice, and endeavours to treat Moslems and Christians with equal fairness. He welcomed us warmly, and appreciated our desire to bring the Syrians into close relations with him. He has held his own for some five years against the interminable intrigues of his numerous enemies, and we hope he will do so for many years to come. O. H. P.

REPORT OF THE VAN STATION

13th May, 1907.

I have secured a very fine site, six acres in extent, for our new buildings at the cost of £230. It is situated some distance from the town; indeed it is quite on the outskirts of the Garden City, with no houses in the immediate vicinity. In view of the epidemics which from time to time visit Van, this separation should prove of great advantage. Also it stands high and will be very healthy for the boys. We hope to be able to make good use of the land not required for the actual buildings. There is a fine orchard with good old fruit trees, a large vineyard, and sufficient land besides on which to grow a considerable crop of wheat, potatoes, or whatever is thought most advisable. While in the near future we hope to see another school for Syrian girls revived on the lines of our former school at Urmi. The shape of the property, which is long and narrow, makes it very adaptable for such division.

Although the land is secured, the final purchase and transfer of the title-deeds cannot be completed until permission arrives from Constantinople. Our application for a *firman* from the Sultan, giving permission to purchase the ground and build a school and chapel thereon, should be now before the authorities in Constantinople, and our embassy are doing all in their power to press the matter to a rapid conclusion.

Our hope is that the permission may arrive in time for us to be able to complete the skeleton and rough work of the building before the winter, so that the walls may have time to dry and settle before the work is pushed to a conclusion the following spring. In no case is it safe in this country, where the walls are made of mud, to enter a new building immediately after its completion. With

all large buildings the usual and wisest plan is to complete the skeleton one year, leaving it to dry and settle some months before completing. It is therefore very important to make a good commencement this summer, or we shall be left in our present very cramped quarters for two further years.

I have just returned from a visit to five of the Syrian villages near Van. I had hoped to visit four others, but the roads were still quite impassable owing to the melting snows. We have five schools amongst these villages ; those that I saw seemed to have been working satisfactorily this winter, though in one large village, *Serazi*, containing nearly one hundred Syrian houses, the school ought to be much larger. The difficulty in this case, as in many others, is to find a suitable room and large enough to hold the children. Some of the churches are sadly in need of repairs ; the villagers do what they can, but all are so poor that they cannot afford to buy the necessary timber to make their walls secure and the roofs watertight. We have been able gradually to supply all these churches with what is requisite for the Holy Eucharist, owing to the labour of kind friends at home, and most of them with the necessary service-books. Five of these villages are served by only one priest, who works hard and well, tramping from one to the other as his services are required, as well as teaching a small school. I met him going the round to celebrate the Syrian Easter Eucharist in the several churches. W. S. B.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

An average of ten hours a day for six days were we on the road, and that with a party including quite small boys of ten and fourteen years as well as old men. I suppose we numbered some 50 in all—2 apostles, 4 or 5 rabbis, 31 boys, and 12 or 14 porters. It was a tight fit at some of

the small villages where we spent our nights. On the road I said we were; and one naturally thinks of a nice straight English road, with its neat hedges and level track.

Far otherwise was our road, for only once in the journey did we strike anything that could be called a road, and most of the time we were making our own tracks through soft snow, the boys going first in single file, that there might be something of a track for the porters; and all the time our eyes had to be on the ground, or down to our knees in the snow we went. The distance from Van to Qudshanis is about 100 miles, a three hours' railway journey; and we took something like sixty hours, with an expenditure of foot energy that twice that mileage in England would not have taken. I was filled with amazement at the powers of endurance displayed by the boys, for it was the time of the Great Fast, and so no animal food could be eaten, not even milk, butter, or cheese, and their only food consisted of bread and raisins. Imagine what an English boy would say to doing such a journey under such conditions! I am sure the temper of even the smartest member of a Cadet Corps or Lads' Brigade would have disappeared by the end of the first day, and what a grumbling there would be! but except once, when the small bishop-designate of Gawar was entering on a fight with a boy three times his size, there were no signs of ill humour or grouching. And always the boys seemed on the look-out to do something for the apostles—to fetch a cup of water from the mountain stream, or find the best place to cross the stream, or carry our sticks or field-glasses or anything. Then, too, how amazing was their agility! leaping from stone to stone over mountain streams, or running like goats along the sides of some mountain where it was with difficulty we apostles could find foothold.

We did not come to Qudshanis as complete a party as left Van, for on the fourth day the way of the Mar Bhishu boys

parted from ours, and four or five for that place went off by themselves to arrive in due course at their homes—except for one poor fellow who had been rather showing the white feather all the while, and had to lie up with a bad foot in a Kurdish village. A day or so later four Diz boys left us to go a shorter route to their own villages. Two of these came over to Qudshanis a little while ago (how different they looked from what they do at school, as they turned up in full mountain rig, with daggers in their waistbelts, guns, and many-cartridge belted) and told us how their escort from the Kurdish village where we parted had soon turned nasty and threatened to kill them if they did not produce some money, and how by appealing to a friendly Kurd they eventually got clear of their bullies.

But with these exceptions we all came to Qudshanis to receive a right hearty welcome from Mr. Browne and Mar Shimun's house, and thence a day or two later those for Tiari, Baz, Jilu, and Sapna went on their way.

It was a great joy to be in Qudshanis, for it brought the feeling that now one was among one's own people, instead of being surrounded by Armenians and Turks; and after the crowded excitement of Van the quiet mountain village brought a sense of restfulness and peace that was very welcome, and with this there came also real spiritual refreshment from the "homey" feeling of the Qudshanis Mission House Chapel, and from the companionship of that fresh vigorous-minded veteran Mr. Browne. And though the village was covered with snow when we arrived, all that has now disappeared, and everything is becoming beautiful with fresh spring green; and we have the constant singing of birds and the sound of the boys' songs, as they sit on the foremost yoke of the ploughing oxen. And yet one does not have that feeling of being out of things that the country usually brings, for always there are messengers or visitors to Mar Shimun coming up from one or other of the tribes,



VILLAGE OF MAZI, PLAIN OF SUPNA

so that we get plenty of news and plenty to talk about. I had always heard of the "unchanging" East, but could never have dreamt that it was so unchanging till I came to Qudshanis. What pleasure one takes in England in coming across a custom, or form of building, or phrase that can claim a few centuries' antiquity ; and here one sees the same sort of ploughing, the same manner of life, the same sort of buildings, the same head and foot gear, often the same phrases, or at least words, the same sort of food (wish there wasn't !) as must have been in use 2000 or 3000 years ago. If material things undergo so little change, it makes one realise that we must be content if the change in spiritual things is very slow, and, too, one cannot help feeling how very great must be the power of the Holy Spirit when among such unchanging people Christianity has become something real, and old superstitions and heresies have been and are dying out. Indeed, and indeed, GOD'S Holy Spirit has been with this ancient Church in a marvellous manner.

F. J. B. B.

SYRIAN SCHOOLBOYS

VAN, Oct. 25, 1908.

The boys, under the guidance of Mar Shimun's personal zaptieh, Ahmed Effendi, have arrived at Van.

The three younger brothers of the Patriarch, Hormizd, Zeia, and Paulus, have come, as has now been the case for three years. The elder brother, Hormizd (aged nineteen), is a very promising lad. Already he has shown himself capable of being a useful helper to his brother, in some diplomatic negotiations with a Kurdish chief ("a kingdom trusted to a schoolboy's care" in very truth !), and he is very loyal to Mar Shimun.

With the boys from the house of the Patriarch have come : (1) their cousin Daniel, the son of Ismail, the princi-

pal Malik of Tyari, and indeed in the nation ; (2) the Bishop of Berwar, Mar Yabhalaha, whose unhappy diocese is now too hot to hold him. In fact, he had to flee to Qudshanis in the summer, to save his liberty, and possibly his life, from the Kurdish Mira, Reshid.

This young man (for he is full young for a Bishop, according to our notions, though at least he has grown a beard) read for four years in the school before Mar Shimun would consent to consecrate him ; and it must be recorded to his credit that he has, of his own free will, come back to the school now that circumstances have turned him out of his diocese. In doing this he has faced that which a Syrian fears more than anything else in the world, the fear of tongues. There have been plenty of people to tell him that for a Bishop to go to school again is *iba* (shame), and to face the fear of *iba* is really much for a Syrian to do.

Two Qashas of Ashitha, who have previously been full of suspicion of us and all our works, have now asked to be allowed to send their sons, and they have been received. It is a gratifying thing to see old prejudices thus melting away.

Among other boys whom we have had before, but who have come back to us again, we will mention the names of Jonathan, the sharp and very bellicose *Natir Kursi* of Gawar (his quarrelsome habits have earned him the nickname of "Mar Barsoma"),¹ and also Saypu of Lizan, who has won a reputation as a warrior also, but in sterner fields.

When the Kurds came down to his village, in the burning of the valley of Lizan, he virtuously hid all his books in a hole in the rocks, and then formed one of the band who, by their defence of the bridge that crosses the Zab at that point, saved the whole of Upper Tyari from the fate that had befallen the side valley. Saypu went into the fight with a

¹ A remarkably bellicose Syrian prelate (mercifully, not a saint in their calendar), who flourished in the fifth century.

borrowed flint-lock. He came out of it with a breech-loader of his own, captured from its late owner. This lad will never make a teacher, or a priest, but we could do with more of his stamp in this nation.

We left Van in April, very glad to get our boys out of a city where a revolutionary outbreak had been rather grimly repressed, and where we lived in continual anxiety that our boys might get into trouble, not from any complicity with the revolutionaries, but from their ineradicable longing to live on the roof and see the fun. We returned in August to find ourselves in Utopia: Turks walking the streets arm in arm with Armenians, and all classes heartily celebrating the Sultan's birthday, one revolutionary standing for parliament, another starting a local paper, with caricatures; and the commander of the garrison entertaining the "Fedayê" to dinner.

What will be the outcome of this peaceful revolution? Good must come of it, not least for our Mission. Suspicion of missionaries should disappear, and our Syrians ought to benefit, for they have always been loyal subjects of the Sultan. But the Turks who led the revolution had no intention that the Empire shall be anything but Ottoman, whatever may be the religion of its subjects; and Christian nations which make use of their liberty to foster ancient political ambition may find themselves suppressed in the old stern way.

Here in Hakkiari, a remote place, no change can come speedily. The Kurds certainly will not be eager to give up their old predatory habits; and some Christians, too, may be loth to see the old game come to an end. But we may look with confidence to the possibility of men being able to reap where they have sown, and obtaining more even-handed justice in the courts. These two things secured, few of our people will care for the franchise.

Probably the changes will have another effect: with less need for foreign protection, many who embraced the faith of

foreigners will return to their old faith, and the national churches will gain great strength ; and of this there are signs already among the Armenians at Van.

The opportunity for our Mission, which has always set its face against proselytism, is great. We may come to a practical discussion of the terms of inter-communion, which, as material aims are less to the fore, may be based on a truer and deeper foundation. GOD grant this may be so.

W. A. W.

At the news that the Sultan had granted Constitutional Government to his people, a change came over the people round us—gradually the overwhelming sense of astonishment changed to widespread rejoicing. It was something to see the Armenians in Van—so short a time previously cowering in their houses before the visits of Turkish soldiery searching for arms, and daily expecting massacre—realising that they could laugh and talk as they wished ; and stranger still to see people not only out in the streets after dark, but “ mafficking ” with illuminations and triumphal arches.

The Syrians, in common with all Ottoman subjects, must be very great gainers if representative government brings a more consistent administration of the Turkish laws—so excellent in themselves, so seldom enforced—and instead of haphazard collection of taxes with all sorts of depredations on the part of the little officials, we may look for equity and justice in this regard. Still greater gain we may hope for in the removal of the fear of the Kurdish brigand. Syrians in the vicinity of Kurds have hardly been able to call their soul their own, have had no inducement to toil for anything but the bare necessities of life ; and have been absolutely incapacitated from doing anything for the support of churches and schools, clergy and teachers. The average Turk is far too enlightened a person to approve of their disorders.

F. J. B. B.

CHAPTER IX

VAN VILLAGES

NOT least, perhaps, among the advantages which the new régime in Turkey has brought to the Missionaries resident there is this, that now at length short journeys are no longer frowned on by prudent Consuls. Hitherto, if one wanted to go anywhere, a zaptieh was an inevitable, and often a hampering accompaniment; not that the presence of this worthy policeman was a nuisance in itself (for, taken as a whole, the corps are good, and often very good fellows), but it was a trouble to have to ask for him, an expense to have to pay him, and when all is said and done, one prefers to go about one's pastoral work without the presence of a policeman! Now, for the present at any rate, things are better, and except in one or two prohibited directions, one can go about as freely here as one could in Persia in days before the revolution. Thus we have been able to make regular visitations of the Syrian villages round about Van, in a way that has hitherto been impossible, and in this we have been much helped by the transference of the Mission horses from Urmi to Van.

One person who has shown himself both an eager and very efficient "walker in villages" is Hormizd, brother of Mar Shimun, who is still at the school, and it has been a very great pleasure to the Missionaries, and to the senior teachers, to see this young fellow rise to his position and responsibilities as one of the hereditary chiefs of his "Melet." It must be remembered that all members of the "house of

the Apostle Peter," whether ordained or not, have by inheritance a high position in the nation, and that few Syrians are educated to the point of distinguishing Church and State, or of remembering that even the brother of the Patriarch, unless he be ordained, is nothing more than a lay member of the Church. Hence the welcome given to this schoolboy in his journeys round the villages was at once quaint and pathetic. "Now we shall prosper, now our crops will be good, and our flocks and herds will increase, for the brother of Mar Shimun has come to bring us a blessing," was the greeting given him in one village, that of Ermanis. . . . In Zel, which is hidden away in the recesses of the Chokh range of mountains, "Had you not come, Kesi, we should have turned Chaldean, or perhaps Protestant; we have been left alone by our Patriarch for so long, and we thought that he had quite forgotten us. Now we know that Mar Shimun cares." Certainly this nation, in common with all other Christian nations of the East, show their best side far more readily, when approached, not by the foreigner, but by one whom they recognise as their own head. The foreigner, be he English, French, or American, is fair game; every one knows that his wealth is boundless, and why should you not take advantage of the opportunity that his coming gives? When, however, it is the true head of the "Melet," or one who is his representative, who comes, the case is very different, and there is a much nearer approach to the spirit of the words, "We seek not yours, but you."

The difficulty is, in all these nations, to find a leader, who will regard his high position as a trust and a means of service, not, as is so often the case, as a piece of personal property. It is a matter for deep thankfulness that Mar Shimun should be, on the whole, so ready to take high views of his office, and also that he should be able to find lieutenants just where his predecessors have usually found hinderers, viz. among his own brothers.



DEACONS' SCHOOL, VAN

THE SCHOOL OF POKHANIS

About three hours from Van is the village of Pokhanis, inhabited largely by Assyrians. A deputation from them came in during the winter, begging for a school and a Rabbi. "I have a room in my house," said the white-haired Reiss, who headed the body, "and the school can meet there, and I will give food and lodging to the Rabbi if you will send one." Regretfully we had to admit that there was neither money nor Rabbi available, and the deputation had to withdraw, disappointed. That evening, however, another deputation arrived, consisting this time of the two senior boys of the School. "Rabbi, we have been doing council concerning this affair of Pokhanis, and think it a heavy thing that the village should have no school. If it please you to give leave, one of us will go out each week and make to read the boys, and when the week is over that boy shall come back and another go in his place."

Leave was gladly given, and for the whole winter the elder boys of the school (*i.e.* those in the "Deacons" class) went out, each in his turn, and lodged for a week in the village acting as teacher. Finally, the school was inspected, and the inspector could announce with triumph, "There is not a boy in the village who does not know his Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Lakhumara anthem"—an anthem which occurs in practically every service, and runs thus: "Thee, Lord of all, do we confess, and JESUS CHRIST do we glorify, for Thou art the Creator of the body, and Thou art the Saviour of the soul." The old Reiss, Sergius, usually escorted the teacher of the week to and fro, and begged as a favour that when he came, he might be allowed to sit in one of the classes and share in the lessons.

The village of Toni was visited early in March. Here

the Qasha is an almost absolutely unlearned man, and a cripple, having lost the use of his right arm from a Kurdish bullet. It is worth mentioning that some purists objected to a maimed man celebrating the Qurbana, and the matter was referred to Mar Shimun. The canons were certainly clear, that a maimed man may not act as Qasha. Mar Shimun's verdict, however, showed strong common sense and comprehension of principles. "How did he lose the use of his arm?" he asked. "Kesi, he was protecting his daughter from a Kurd, and the Kurd shot at him." "A man does not annul his Qashaship if he confesses in persecution and is crippled by the tormentors," said the Patriarch. "This seems to me to be a case like that. Let Qasha Sahde celebrate without fear."

Qasha Sahde is not an ideal teacher for any school, poor fellow, but at least all his scholars knew their Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and the daily services were regularly conducted in the church. The population of the village numbers about 150. On an ordinary evening, we found a congregation of 35 gathered at Evensong, and at matins (said at 5 A.M. on that March morning), 18 were present. How many English parishes will undertake to show a like proportion, or even like numbers?

CHURCH RESTORATION IN A SYRIAN VILLAGE

In the Name, &c.

To the Honoured and Revered Mr. Heazell, the Apostle of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Peace in our Lord.

After greetings of love, and anxious longing, it is my hope in our Lord that this my letter will come to you when you are in health and happiness. Now I wish to write a

little to you about our matters that are in Van. There is a village of our Syrians called Khinu, distant four hours' journey from Van, where there are thirty-five houses. About ten years ago, the Roman Catholics scattered therein much money, for they had four Qashas there, and all the men of the village save four houses that stood by the faith of their fathers, for the men of this village are very poor.

They had a church that was built about two hundred and fifty years ago; its workmanship from the beginning was not good, and now it was near to ruin, and rain and snow from heaven fell into the sanctuary. The Roman Catholics had built another church in the village, and were sucking up all the people from it.

Now in the year 1908, I, by the command of Mr. Wigram, visited this village to make inquiry there. I saw their state, that they were greatly bowed down in heart, for that there was no Qasha there, and none to care for them. Then in the year 1909 I visited them four times and spoke comfortable words to them, words of hope that make glad the heart, and these men little by little turned from their new religion, and two of the Qashas turned with them. Then when I saw that all the village was ours, save seven houses (and now indeed there remain but four), after the preaching of one Sunday, I thought that it would be better to speak with them about the renewing of that ancient church, though indeed my hope was but little, owing to the poverty of the men of the village, for there was not one of them that could raise ten piastres. However, they all declared with one voice, "If the Lord will, we will in the spring begin the work of building the church." After this, about the 10th of Adar of us Easterns (March 24th) Mr. Wigram, the head of the Mission, himself came there, and he spoke with them about this matter, and then these men sent three men to the Yard of the Apostles to ask for some help, and Mr.

Wigram gave the money for the wage of the master-builder (who was not a man of the village), for the building of the walls of the church. So, after the Great Feast, they began the work, and the walls were taken away, even the foundations, and every man left his own business and came to work for the church, men and women and boys and girls ; and even boys of seven years were dragging small stones and bringing mud in their hands for the walls, and old men and old women, who had not worked for years, were now slowly dragging stones on their backs.

Every house in the village gave wood from their own vineyards for the beams and rafters and boards and windows, and the young men were divided into two bands, the one working at the building of the church, while the other drew great stones with ox-carts from the mountains.

Also, for the master-workman, every house gave a measure of corn and a measure of oil, and the men of the village gave bread for him, and for his house. Verily, as in an ant-hill, every one is busy doing his work, so it was with the men of this village, for every one was working at some work, and the women even more, for they kept bringing earth in baskets on their backs, and the children brought water for the mud (used for mortar), while the men worked at the bringing of the stones and beams. Thus the work was finished, a church built throughout of stones, for not one brick of mud was in it, a church full half as large again as that which was before, most beautiful, large, and new, and great indeed was the joy that the men of this village had in this great work.

But one unfortunate thing happened before the church was finished. The Bishop of the Roman Catholics, with the Qashas of the village, petitioned the Government to stop the building, saying that it was being built in the name of the English, and that all the cost of the building was being borne by the English, and that this was how they

were working, bit by bit, to get an English *melet* established here; then too, they said that it was a new church, being built without a firman,¹ though there has always been a church in this village of ours, and one is enough. Their idea was to prevent us having a church at all, so that men would have to go to their church, and so at last would follow them. In these crooked ways, everywhere where there is even one of these people, they are always troubling our *melet*.

When the Government heard this, they quickly sent a Mamur to stop the whole business, and to see in whose name the men were building the church. So the whole building was stopped, and the men were greatly grieved. However, one of the Qashas who had come back from the Roman Catholics did a bold thing, for he went with three of the village grey-beards to the city of Van, and made petition to Yavar Pasha, who was Vali there, to this effect: "We are building this church in our own name, and that of our Patriarch, for ourselves, and not for the English, for we are not English, and the English will never do Qurbana in this church." When the Governor heard this, all that our opponents had said became abominable in his eyes, and (thanks be to him therefore) he gave command at once that the building should be finished, and that no obstacle should be put in the way. Not only did he do this, but he also rebuked them, when next they came to pay court at the Door of Government.

May God strengthen the hands of those faithful men in England, who in love, help in the raising up of the Assyrian Church according to its own Order. It was near to falling, but now it is becoming a worthy church, more especially in these two years. It is our hope that one day it will be a perfect church, as at the first, and will have Bishops and

¹ An ancient church may always be restored; Government permission is needed for a new one.

priests and preachers in abundance. May God reward its helpers by giving them thrones in heaven.

Peace be to your house, and your friends, and more especially to your honoured Mother.—Your Friend,
WERDA YONAN, Deacon.

Our friends will like to know how our Syrians prospered in the building of the church at Khinu. Of course when the church was finished, its consecration was needful, and a deputation of villagers came in to beg that we telegraph at once to Mar Shimun, requesting the presence of a Bishop for the purpose. Everything was ready, all prepared, and they had now been without Qurbana for long; would not a Bishop come at once? We wrote to Qudshanis, thinking that a telegram was hardly needful, and Mar Shimun, with commendable promptitude, did send a Bishop down, Mar Yabhalaha of Berwar, who really has been his Patriarch's handy man, during his own banishment by Reshid Bey from his diocese. On his arrival, a messenger was sent out to the village to say that the Bishop had arrived, and would come to the village on the following Sunday.

A little episode followed, characteristic enough to be worth recording. Another deputation came in, sat on the floor in the reception room and looked uncomfortable.

"Peace be unto you, O Rabbi Qasha and Reiss and Deacons," said the Apostle. "Behold by the power of Mar Shimun the Bishop has come as you prayed; will not next Sunday be a fit day for the ordination of the church?"

"Well, Rabbi, it is a fit day—but, Rabbi, I will tell the truth, the church is not quite ready."

"But you said it was ready, and prayed that the Bishop would come at once?"

"Truth, Rabbi, we did say so—but we did not think he would come quite so soon."

Cross-examination gradually elicits the fact that though

the church is finished, quite finished, yet it is not yet "lord of door," and though it has windows, splendid windows, those windows are not yet "lord of glass." As, after all, these are things that the villagers can hardly make for themselves, and they have worked well for their church, the Apostolic wealth is taxed to the extent of the 5s. that a door costs, and a date is fixed for the consecration.

The whole amount of cash that has changed hands over the erection of the building is £6, 14s. 4d. That was paid entirely to the Armenian carpenter-mason who directed the work, no Assyrian accepting a *para* for his labour. It must be added that the men of the village have also built a school for themselves, a less pretentious building of mud brick, now duly registered in the Government books as an educational institution and church property.

On the Feast of Holy Cross, or properly, on the Sunday within the octave, Mar Yabhalaha performed the Consecration of the new church, the rite consisting in the solemn signing of the Cross on the four sides of the Sanctuary with consecrated oil (pure olive oil), and the anointing of the altar with the same. All was of course accompanied with the due prayers; and the celebration of Qurbana, at which there were about ninety communicants, duly followed. One of the invariable accompaniments of the consecration of a church (though it is not technically part of the consecration rite), is the placing of the vessel containing *Melka* in the church. *Melka*, as may be known, is the "holy leaven," and the name for it means "King."

MAR SHIMUN AND THE VALI OF VAN

We have had a visitor to Van, unexpected but welcome, in the shape of Mar Shimun himself. His coming was unpremeditated, and he left Qudshanis with the intention of going no further than Bashkala, there to meet the Vali; the

Vali, who has only recently been appointed, has introduced the new but admirable custom of going round his province, to see things with his own eyes, and to make personal acquaintance with the principal men. Not being able to go to Julamerk or Qudshanis, he asked Mar Shimun to meet him in Bashkala, but they missed one another there, and the Patriarch accordingly came on to Van.

His business with the Vali, of course, was political only, and was concerned for the most part with the Tyari-Berwar question, and with the question of the subjection of Christians to the conscription, to which they are liable under the constitution. As regards the first matter, Mar Shimun was at least able to put the Christian side of the question fully before a governor who gave him a fair hearing, though he may not have the power to do all that we should desire.

The fact is that the Government are not anxious to rouse "the Kurdish question" till they have settled other points of more European importance. On the second point, it is of course too much to expect that Christians should welcome the liability to military service, which is the most tangible thing that the new *régime* has brought them as yet, beneficial though the discipline is likely to be to the whole *melet* in the long-run. Many had begged their Patriarch to try to secure them their old exemption; but this is, of course, quite beyond his power, even if it was his wish. All that he hopes or even desires is that Christians shall be enrolled in separate companies (not battalions), in order that facilities may be given them for the observance of their religious duties; this much, there is good hope that they may obtain.

In any case the making of the personal acquaintance of the Vali by Mar Shimun is a good and useful thing; each seems to have personally liked the other.

While conversing on church matters with the writer, Mar Shimun raised the question of a choice of Bishops for Alkosh and Urmi, and the writer suggested that it would

be a pity to allow the uncanonical *Natir Kursi* system to extend itself again in dioceses which had become free of that encumbrance. Mar Shimun agreed, observing, "Of course, the thing is as uncanonical as anything can be, but it has been useful among the mountaineers in preventing quarrels and schisms at every vacancy." The truth of the statement cannot be denied, and indeed it must be admitted that though the quasi-hereditary episcopate is an uncanonical scandal, it can hardly be more contrary to primitive custom than nomination by a "universal Pope," or by a lay premier. There is a proverb about glass houses.

After the consecration of Khinu Church, the Bishop, with Hormizd and "the Apostle," paid a round of visits among the Syrian villages of Van district. It was harvest time, and at every village capfuls of corn were brought to the Bishop, with prayer that he would deign to bless "seed, crop, and threshing-floor," which he invariably did with great dignity.

One small incident may be mentioned for the hopefulness of it. The village of Ermanis, which is mixed Syrian and Kurdish, has a dispute with their neighbours of Khinu, the one asserting, the other denying, a right to drive sheep over the ground of their neighbour, in order that, at certain times of the year, the sheep may drink the salt waters of the lake on which Khinu looks. Ermanis, lying in an elevated basin, possesses no salt-lick. The Mussulmans of this village not only agreed (at the prayer of the village deacon, be it said to his credit) to refrain from going to law with the men of Khinu, but also fully agreed to submit to the decision of "Mar Shimun's brother," if he would act as Umpire. This is not only a high compliment to the character of this youth, but is a sign of the times. People who know their Ottoman Empire well have often said, "When you can get a Turk to obey a rayat, we may begin

to believe in reform." In this case Kurds voluntarily submitted an important decision to the impartiality of a Christian youth. It is a most hopeful sign.

A VISIT TO THE MATRAN

Of all the various districts where members of the Assyrian Church are to be found, there is none which, during the history of the Mission, has been so inaccessible as Neri, where there lives the second dignitary of the whole body, the Metropolitan, Mar Khnanishu. The reign of terror instituted in the country by the late Sheikh Sadiq, ruler of the country, and more particularly ruler of the person of the Matran, is of course the reason for this, but the effect has been that during the existence of the Mission, I believe two visits only have been paid by "apostles" to the neighbourhood.

Political events have made travel in this dangerous district more easy of late.

The redoubtable Sheik Sadiq (the murderer of Mar Gauriel, Bishop of Urmi, in 1898) is now dead, and his son and successor, Tahir, is by no means the man that his father was.

Kartona, the village in which is the summer residence of the Sheikh, was a melancholy place for one of our party to visit. It was the home of Mr. Neesan's boyhood, in the days when it was a prosperous Christian village, whereas now only the foundations of the church remain, and I believe, not a single Christian family.

Life here became impossible for them when the Sheikh coveted the site for his country house, and they were either forcibly expelled, or plagued into leaving the country. The site of the church has not been built over, partly perhaps from the reverence that most Kurds feel for Christian shrines, but more, I think because it stood a little apart

from the village, near to where a "petrifying spring," of the sort common in this country, pours a great curtain of golden-coloured travertine over the lip of a beetling rock to the bottom of the valley, 40 feet below. The village is but a short distance from the residence of the Matran, which can be reached in a morning's ride. The "cell," which consists of an ordinary house, of no great size, attached to the church of Mar Khnanishu, has a position of singular beauty. Standing in the midst of a wood of oak and holm-oak, it looks across a deep valley to other ranges of high rugged mountains, all much better wooded than is the custom in this land, and rising to a magnificent range of snow peaks, called Mustoghan Dag, which reach a height of 14,000 feet.

Beautiful though the site of Qudshanis may be, on its long projecting spur, between its deep gorges, it cannot compare for a moment with that of the Matran's cell.

The Matran himself is certainly the best read of the Bishops of his Church who are now to be found in Kurdistan, though Mar Timotheus of Malabar is most likely his equal. None, too, can doubt his deep personal piety and love for his Church. His cast of mind, however, is very conservative, and he has a deep reverence which is not always intelligent for all that "our Fathers" have written, or are even supposed to have written. He is, moreover, a weak and timid man, and long oppression at the hands of the Sheikh (whom he calls "that great one") has knocked out of him what little spring there may ever have been in his character. Fear of rousing the suspicions of this master of his keeps him from doing much that he might do with safety for the Church that he loves. He has never visited Mar Shimun, or allowed the Patriarch to visit him, since the occasion of his consecration in 1903, and he will not even go about his own diocese lest the Sheikh should fear that

some dire plot is afoot. He is much better off, in a worldly sense, than most of his brethren. Some, indeed, say that he has too much to lose, and would do his work better in comparative poverty; this, however, is an accusation that we have heard levelled against even English bishops, and we must own that Mar Khnanishu makes good use of his property. He has several young men with him, whom he prepares for ordination, and though the preparation is not such as would commend itself to a western (for it hardly goes beyond the proper chanting of the service, and the writing of a beautiful hand,) it is an effort in the right direction.

His *Natir Kursi*, a youth of seventeen, whose manners are singularly attractive, lives with him, and this youth (whose name is Yosip) has been already prematurely admitted to priest's orders. We made an effort to persuade his Grace to send this lad, if not to Van, at least to the Patriarch's house at Qudshanis, that he might learn that there is a part of the world outside the shadow of the Sheikh; but though he promised to consider this, I fear that his nerves will not allow him to act on the suggestion.

Of his own accord the Matran brought forward, in conversation, the question of terms of inter-communion. It was his idea, as it is that of many of the nation, that the unofficial visit of the Bishop of Gibraltar a year ago¹ was to settle this vexed question with Mar Shimun, and it is probably significant that this erroneous idea was welcomed by practically all the nation.

We assured the Matran, of course, that the visit of the Bishop had been personal and unofficial only, though, of course, we added that his Lordship had freely discussed with Mar Shimun terms of possible inter-communion, and we informed him of what those suggested terms had been. They were, as a matter of fact, essentially the same as those embodied in resolutions 63 and 64 of the Lambeth Confer-

¹ See the following chapter.

ence, though we were, unfortunately, not aware of this at the time of our visit (August 12th). The Matran declared that he saw no difficulty in the mutual acceptance of such terms, and added, *proprio motu*, a statement which surprised as much as it delighted us, viz., that he had come to the conclusion that all personal anathemas ought to be dropped, as things in themselves "unworthy." Such a statement as this from the most conservative of all Assyrian bishops, the man whom even the stiff-necked of Ashitha hold in honour, shows that the old narrow pride in their position which once distinguished Assyrians is breaking down.

It is specially significant when we remember that it was this very Mar Khnanishu who insisted on the special anathema on St. Cyril being read at Qudshanis, on the last occasion (now some fifteen years ago), when that section of a certain special service containing anathemas was not omitted, as is usually the case at that church.

One point was brought forward by our host, which is worth mentioning, as showing what unexpected obstacles may occur in this land of the unforeseen. "You have the succession of Bishops," he said, "but have you the succession of the leaven?" By Assyrian custom, as some of our readers may know, a fragment of the previously consecrated and reserved bread is placed in the loaf which is baked for each Qurbana. This is the only use of reservation among them, and by this *Melka* ("King," a title which reminds one of the Spanish name for the host, *Su Majestad*) the bread of each Eucharist is placed, they hold, in direct connection with, and succession from, that used at all previous celebrations, back to that performed by our LORD Himself. As a custom of rare significance, this may be familiar to some Englishmen; as an obstacle to inter-communion, comparable to the absence of any true succession of bishops, it was unexpected; it was not, however, pressed by the Matran, and would not, I think, be pressed by anyone else. When such

a line is taken by the most conservative and timorous of Assyrians, may we not hope and pray that GOD in His providence will open the way to closer relations with the Church, particularly when, by His goodness, recent changes in Turkey have taken away most of the danger that the political suspicions of the Government might be roused by over-friendliness between its subjects and the undesired Foreigner?

W. A. W.

CHAPTER X

THE CATHOLICOS AND HIS RELATIVES

MAR SHIMUN received us in his *diwan khana*, he sitting cross-legged on his couch, Browne and I on chairs, the rest of the world upon the floor. He is strongly built, very handsome, like all his family, and with most particularly fine manners. Of course he has been brought up to this position, but he really fills it extremely well. Seeing him in his divan among the chiefs of his nation, one can understand what young kings of mediæval times, like our Edward III for instance, looked like at their accession.

I am a good deal impressed by him, and Browne, who has seen him in difficult times, still more so. Browne says that he can hear advice from anyone, can hold his tongue, and can make up his own mind and act upon it. These qualities ought to take him very far among his own people; and with these half-civilised people his good looks and personal dignity are great points in his favour.

Well, he brought in the boys from the school at Van. When Browne presented me I tried to kiss Mar Shimun's hand; but he anticipated me, and kissed me instead—the boys who saw it gasped! Then we all drank coffee: Qasha Awimelk made a short speech: Mar Shimun replied suitably, and the function ended.

Mar Shimun's sister, Surma, was present. She is rather older than her brother, a straightforward, sensible girl (educated by Browne), a staunch ally. The brothers

are young boys still ; his mother, Asiat, is unhappily an invalid ; Sulti, his aunt, is now getting on in years.

We called on these ladies and on the principal officials of the little court, which is of the most primitive description ; and the call was returned in the course of the day.

W. A. W.

THE BISHOP OF GIBRALTAR'S VISIT TO QUDSHANIS, 1907

Two ecclesiastical events of some importance have marked the past autumn in the Assyrian Church : the visit of the Bishop of Gibraltar, and the consecration of the Assyrian Metropolitan of Malabar.

The first of these was purely unofficial. His Lordship happened to be visiting Baku and Trans-Caucasia generally at the time when the writer passed through that province on his way to Van, and was fortunately able to pay a brief visit both to Van and Qudshanis.

The Bishop's time was limited, and we therefore (rather rashly, in November) attempted to reach Qudshanis by the summer route from Van, which, if passable at all, takes three days instead of five. His enterprise drew from the Syrians the remark, " Verily and indeed, Rabbi, the English bishops are very strong men."

That we received in Qudshanis the warmest of welcomes from Browne and the Patriarchal house goes without saying ; anyone who knows the Patriarch, too, will be certain that he would show to so distinguished a guest all the courtesy and charm of manner that distinguish his family ; especially as it was the first occasion that an English prelate has ever visited these wilds. The appearance of an English Bishop was in itself an object-lesson to the Assyrians which is likely to be useful. They have known, of course, that the English have bishops like their



MAR SHIMUN

own: there is a difference, however, between hearing and seeing, and the appearance of a bishop in the flesh has had a very real effect on their imaginations, "specially when he came in such weather, Rabbi." Mar Shimun also, as we hear now from various different sources, was immensely struck by the personality and conversation of his Lordship, and we may hope that the recollection may be a real help to him in his very difficult work.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER OF THE BISHOP OF GIBRALTAR

As to the Syrian people, I lost my heart to them completely; and I think there can be no question that they are a finer race than the Armenian, the Georgian, and indeed any other of the peoples in that part of the world. The defects in races which have long been subject to the Turk, which usually disgust Western observers, are almost inseparable from long-continued oppression; but the poorest Syrian of the mountains has preserved a natural dignity, courage, and a freshness which are very lovable, whilst he has far more of resourcefulness and "saving common-sense" than most of the people round about. And this, be it remembered, subsists in the face of tyranny and hardships which seem almost to become worse year by year. Even when it is borne in mind that the boys in the Mission School at Van are picked boys, they compel one to form a very high estimate of the race to which they belong; and this estimate was fully confirmed by all that I saw at Qudshanis. Some of those whom I met there, as Mar Shimun himself, and his sister Surma, and the Archdeacon Awimelk (now Mar Timotheus) were already half familiar to me: I will only say here that it was a real delight to get to know them well, and that I must think of them as

real friends, and remember their loving-kindness to me as long as I live.

"Mar Shimun's people" struck me much in their ethnic capacity; I was not less struck with them as a Church. That they are still very ignorant and backward goes without saying; it could hardly be otherwise after centuries of seclusion and persecution. The Mission has not yet done its work of instruction amongst them, and will not have done it for very many years. But there is a naturalness, a simplicity, and a spontaneity about their religion which is very attractive. In many ways they seem to me to illustrate the life of Christians of very early days, both in its strength and its weakness; and again, whilst they have plenty of ethnic superstitions of their own (some derived from Magian sources), there is a remarkable absence of modern "corruptions" in their religion, or of such a mixture of pagan and Christian superstition as is to be found, for example, amongst the Orthodox in some of the Greek islands. On the other hand, there is their Nestorianism, as to which I will only say that it is one thing to go on revering Nestorius as a martyr to the truth (as they undoubtedly consider him to have been) and quite another to go on holding the heresy which goes by his name. That they were once Nestorians is undoubted; but we must never forget that it is the nature of heresy to die, whilst it is the nature of the Faith to live.

I am sure that the work which GOD has given us to do in relation to this ancient Church ought to help us to learn lessons which we sorely need to learn. The fact is that we have been far too much under the influence of certain preconceived ideas with regard to the historical development of the Church of Christ. Perhaps the current theory on the subject is that "the Church was one" until, at some more or less determinate time, the schism of East and West took place; that subsequently certain Churches separated

off from "the Latin Church" in the West, and certain others from "the Greek Church" in the East. By degrees, and with a growing knowledge, we have come to see that this theory will not hold, so far as the West is concerned, for the best of all reasons, viz. that it does not correspond with the facts: it is indeed almost as artificial as the theory of the Papacy itself. But the fact is that it does not hold as regards the East either, and for precisely the same reason. The Armenian and Syrian Churches, and others too, are not "separated Churches," for they never were part of the Greek Church. It is true, and the fact is greatly to be regretted, that these Churches, which were once in communion with one another, are now so no longer; it is true that at particular periods now one, now another of them had come to be in a dependent position towards some particular one. But the fact remains that *the Church* has always existed in the life of the Churches; and that the visible unity of the Church does not mean the coalescence of parts into a new whole, still less the submission of parts to an existing whole, but the full and free fellowship on the part of all in the life which is common to all. It may be that, in GOD'S good providence, the work which He has given us to do on behalf of this little Church is intended to give us larger views of the relations, and of the possibility of peacemaking, between Churches, and thus to fit us for a larger work still in the future.

The second ecclesiastical event has been the consecration, after long delay, of a Bishop, or rather a Metropolitan, for the Syro-Chaldæans of Travancore and Cochin, in South India.

This body, which, after long struggles in the Courts in India, has won definite recognition of its right to exist, and to hold certain not inconsiderable endowments, is that portion of the Church of St. Thomas which still remains loyal to its ancient Patriarch. Anciently, the Church of

Malabar was indisputably one of the many provinces whose Metropolitans owed allegiance to the Patriarch of Baghdad, whose representative is the present Mar Shimun. Roman Catholic (*i.e.* Portuguese) interference cut them off in the fifteenth century from all communication with their chief, and these "Nestorians" in consequence became Jacobite in preference to becoming Roman, and submitted to the Patriarch Ignatius of Mardin. They could hardly have given a better proof that their separation from the bulk of Christendom was for national rather than theological reasons. A portion of the Church, however, remained in more or less uneasy subjection to the Pope, and these "Syro-Chaldæans" are a later separation from that portion who split off about 1850, and then sought, and obtained, a Bishop from their original and unforgotten Patriarch, whose seat had in the meantime shifted several times, and was at last at Qudshanis.

This Bishop (if bishop he be, for he is said by some to be no more than a "Chor-episcopus" in rank) is now a very old man, and a colleague who was sent to him at a later date perished by robbers on the road. The body therefore has for the last three years been anxiously asking for a successor to him from Mar Shimun, and this prayer has been at last granted by the consecration and despatch of a prelate, who will be known in future by the name of his adoption, Mar Timotheus.

Mar Timotheus, who has been known hitherto as Arch-deacon Abimelech or Awimelk, has been educated from boyhood in the English Mission, though he has latterly been working apart from them.

The step is a bold one, if for no other reason than the comparative youth of the man sent; but at a time when the relations of the Church of England in India with the ancient Christian Churches are coming to the front, it may be of importance that the chief pastor of one of the bodies in

question should be a man who has learnt to reverence, and in a measure to understand, the Church of England.

W. A. W.

January 10th, 1908.

WILLIAM HENRY BROWNE

Twenty-five years ago—a quarter of a century—an assistant priest of St. Columba's, Haggerston, was accepted by Archbishop Benson as one of the Missionaries of his new venture of faith—one of the two who on June 2, 1886, were sent forth from Lambeth Chapel. How often has he contrasted his first visit to Lambeth, to be interviewed by Archbishop Tait at the time of the Hatcham Riots, with the visits to Archbishop Benson in 1886 and 1891! He was fond of stories, and would laugh over them; without his gift of being able to see the humorous side of life, he could not have endured the strain of Oriental conditions of mind and character, and have remained young-hearted to the end.

Twenty-four years of such devotion! He went, I suppose, for five years, and then the Syrians stole his heart. Like any other true missionary he stayed because his heart was there, and not because he made a martyrdom of his life. And it is no wonder that they won his heart; the warm, impulsive Celtic emotion was stirred by these mountaineers. He never cared much for the men of the Persian plains; but he loved the hot-blooded people of the Turkish Ashiret tribes, and enjoyed living in the neighbourhood of village feud and daring robbery. And he, too, not in any less degree won them, and they soon knew that he was theirs, not a stranger, but almost one of themselves, loyal to Mar Shimun as though he was of his clan; they knew that he understood them, that he felt with them, almost thought as they thought, where others only tried to appreciate; they found him able to sit and talk, to wait, apparently to do nothing, where

the Saxon wanted to get something settled, to introduce order out of seeming chaos, and above all not to waste time.

It was in the first year of the Mission that Maclean (now Bishop Maclean) and Browne visited the Catholicos; and in the autumn of the next year Browne went back to Qudshanis, and henceforth it was his home. Thus when I first met him he had established himself in his life's work. He had a house in Tyari, built for him by Mr. Riley, I believe, and at these two residences he was already in repute as a doctor. He used to make journeys about the mountain country to visit village schools or to cultivate the friendship of Christian chiefs, and his ready wit made him an interesting character when making calls upon government officials. He was an adept at turning a compliment, and there was nothing about him of the meekness which turned the other cheek to a petty official who wished to impede his movements. Humble as he was with his fellow-workers, and courteous to the Eastern ecclesiastics, deferential to Mar Shimun, and affectionate to those whom he learned to respect and to value, he estimated highly his position as an Archbishop's representative, and had no idea of allowing the respect for an Englishman to suffer in his person.

After five years he had been home, and it was like him that he shortened his visit when he heard of Jervis' death. There is a story told of this English visit, which is probably without foundation, but it is so descriptive of Browne that I must quote it. It is said that when he reached England and saw his bedroom, he rang the bell and told the servant to take the mattress and blankets off the bed and to make them up on the floor. I well remember when and where I first saw him, although I do not recall his appearance. I know so well the Browne who is familiar to us, with his venerable hair and cheery,

welcoming manner, that I can only suppose that even by this time he was cultivating the long locks of a Rabban, and had attained to a beard of dignified proportions.

Daltry and I had had a trying journey, and near to the city of Urmi we were met in the usual Syrian style by a large number of teachers, Mission servants, and leading churchmen, all on horseback, and most of them waving open umbrellas. We had been provided with a carriage to add to our dignity, and then there was a shouting of "Rabbi Mr. Browne," and the dear man was off his horse, dancing about, shaking hands, and telling us over and over again how delighted he was, and how anxious they had been. Into the carriage he got, and we were off again; and now we must stop to shake hands with this man, for he was a very good fellow and loyal to Mar Shimun, or another, who was one of our printers, or the chief of a village; and, at last, we were in the Mission compound, and first we must see Mrs. Neesan, and then go all over the house, and he was sure that we should want to go to bed early, and so on.

I do not suppose that he ought to have come down from Sir to greet us, for he was just recovering from an attack of fever. But Browne was not the man to greet his new fellow-workers with "Well! how are you?" He made our hearts warm to him, and he did his best to make us see the attractiveness of the Syrians, and to persuade us that certain defects were orientalisms. But in the autumn he went back to the mountains, and we only saw him afterwards as an occasional visitor to Urmi, where he was always treated by the Syrians as a superior person to the other apostles. He had about him the glamour of Mar Shimun; his own bearing, too, was rather aristocratic—I believe that an Irishman is always descended from a king—and the Syrians respected him for being a little hot now and then if any discourtesy had been

intended—as for example, if anyone failed to speak correctly of the Catholicos.

His mountain servants loved to tell stories of him—how he had resisted an uppish government official, or had laid his stick upon someone who had ventured to take liberties with him, or of a sharp Syrian repartee or story by which he had taught someone a lesson. And we too looked forward to his visits, and loved to listen to his tales and jests, whether of England or the mountains; occasionally he would break out in Syriac, and we would remind him that we could understand English. And he used to bring his mountain customs with him—the long pipe, the shoeless feet showing the pretty native socks over his black stockings; he preferred to sit upon the floor, and he had discarded the habit of eating meat. He generally came with a good mountain escort, or he himself was doing the courtesies to a member of the Patriarchal house.

Very happily I have the memory of two mountain visits, which gave me opportunity to know him more intimately. In the summer of 1894 I made a journey to Qudshanis under the wing of Mr. Neesan. I was not Browne's guest, but Mar Shimun's, and I lived in the state-rooms. I think that at that time Browne had not proper accommodation for English visitors. Certainly it was in Qudshanis that one saw our brother in his proper surroundings. How strict he was that one should not abate a jot from the etiquette of the Patriarchal court! I practised the right way to greet Mar Shimun; I was made to feel that I was visiting royalty in the favoured position of a friend; the children of the house were little princes to him; Surma was raised on a pinnacle of eminence, combining the dignity of the royal house with the courtesy due to one who was almost treated as an English lady. And dear Browne was like a fussy old hen surrounded by her chickens, and for the time being one became another of his chickens, to be brought out and

made the most of, to be appreciated and shown off. One would hear that one had made a favourable impression, that a trifling action had been thought much of: "You know, these little things count for so much here." They were very happy days, and Browne was at his best. Mar Shimun's favourite half-brother and most loyal adherent, Ishai, was Browne's closest friend, and as Browne's friend he received me at once into his society. We had all our meals together, we made little picnics, and I won Browne's heart by petting the jolly little children, and by being very attentive to Mar Shimun's sister and Ishai's wife.

The second visit was paid under very different conditions. Shamasha Ishai had died in Urmi in February, 1895, and I was deputed to "heal Mar Shimun's head" on behalf of the Mission. On this visit I lived with Browne, and saw a great deal of him; it was at this time that one came to realise how our brother, cut off from the Christian fellowship that we enjoyed in Urmi, very rarely communicating, for he was still without a chapel, maintained his spiritual life of Communion with GOD, and through the fellowship of prayer learned a patience of faith, which was able to leave the future in the hands of Him with whom he lived day by day.

He felt most deeply the loss of Ishai, and yet seemed to forget his own sorrow in sympathy with the mourning family. How tenderly he nursed me when I was somewhat knocked up after the hard winter journey! He plotted with the Patriarch's sister to get me the required quantity of milk and butter, which he himself would not touch, and which must be a dead secret, lest the Lenten habits of the villagers should suffer deterioration, or the English Church be despised as a breaker of Church rule.

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The young Patriarch's sister, Surma, has grown up to fulfil the highest hopes that our brother had of her, and

she is a spiritual force in the family. I think that it must be partly at least from Browne that she has acquired a large fund of sound common-sense, a quality which was so characteristic of him, and often guided him aright, and saved him from some of the mistakes which good people sometimes make. The young brothers, whom I knew as fascinating little monkeys, are now well-developed young men, and have a character about them which leads one to hope that one fruit of Browne's life may be a more united Patriarchal house.

I only once saw Browne when he was in England in 1905; he was looking older, but otherwise he was unchanged. We had lunch together in town, and the waiters seemed somewhat mystified about him. It was a great joy to me to see him, and I think that it was a pleasure also to him, because he knew that I was really fond of Mar Shimun's family. I remember that he took me kindly to task for something that I had said at the Annual Meeting at Lambeth. I never quite knew his position on the vexed question of the Syrian Nestorianism; he had a very sympathetic mind, and he was always seeking for an understanding. While not technically a scholar, he was a very intelligent man, and was a habitual student of Syrian theology.

No doubt his was in many ways a hard life; the winters became increasingly trying to him; at times he suffered annoyance on account of his extreme loyalty to the Catholics, when the opposition could bring any important influence to be exerted against him; government officials naturally tried to impede the movements of an Englishman; and life in a mountain village of Asiatic Turkey is not exactly luxurious to a middle-aged man. But I do not think that he felt the continual interruptions, the inability to get things done, the indifference to time, and other similar orientalisms so much as most men feel them; for, to write

the truth, he was in some ways semi-orientalised through the habits formed in his long residence apart from European society.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that the epithets "venerable" and "picturesque" adequately describe Browne. He was an active man, interpreting to the Syrians by his life the message of the Western Church, and exemplifying its conception of Christianity. Nor do I think that his life would be fitly portrayed by a thrilling picture of his isolation and its restrictions, his native food, his endurance of interruptions and purposeless visits. The word which seems to me most fitly to describe his life is devotion. He gave himself entirely to the people, and like anyone who gives himself in complete forgetfulness of self he had much reward even in this life.

Death came to him on Holy Cross Day (1910). Although the festival does not fall in the East on the same day as with us, his Syrian friends will easily understand that Rabbi Doctor Browne died on the Western feast of Mar Sliwa. Unlike ourselves the Syrians pay great attention to this festival, and in conversation explain that the reason why the Easterns observe the feast on the 13th is that the news of the recovery of the true Cross was spread in the East a day sooner than it could reach the West. One cannot grieve that he has been laid to rest in Qudshanis; it was his home. He lies buried beside the people whom he went forth to meet in simplicity of heart. One cannot mourn that his time for rest is come. But one is conscious that another stage has been reached in the history of this Mission, and that a third life has been laid down in the mission of help from the far Western Church to the outermost boundary of Eastern Christianity.

D. J., S.S.M.

January 1911.

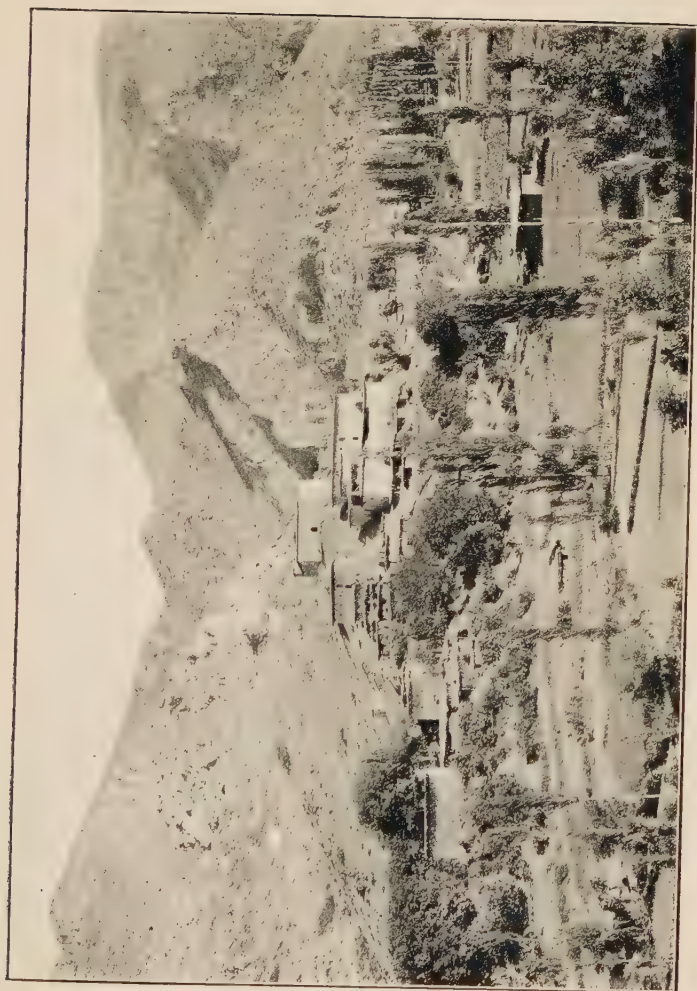
THE NEW RÉGIME IN THE REMOTER PROVINCES

I.—1909

It is, of course, far too soon, even if one desired to write about politics in a Mission journal, to hazard any theories as to the effects of the new régime in Turkey, as it affects this district; one may say, however, that it really does appear that the present Government is determined to keep order, and to do justice between the Kurdish and Christian sections of the population. Of course, during the troubles of the last sixteen years, an endless number of conflicting claims have arisen, concerning, for instance, the ownership of village lands. It might puzzle King Solomon himself to decide all these claims rightly, particularly as Armenians are rather in the habit of "asking for a bullock in the hope of getting an egg," as the local saying puts it. Meantime, a couple of little incidents, which show the casual, go-as-you-please fashion in which justice is administered in this land, may at once amuse and help to give comprehension.

The British Consul in Van had a grievance against a certain Kurdish wood merchant, Jaffar by name, who had engaged to deliver his winter's supply of fuel, had taken part payment, and produced no wood, after an interval of several months.

Out of patience, the Consul complained to the Vali, who ordered the arrest of the defaulter. A short time after, this report was made on the case: "We could not arrest Jaffar, your Excellency, because he was ill in bed when we arrived, but we have brought his brother, and if the Consul would like to have him, we will hand him over, and the Consul can do what he likes with him." The exacting Britisher, I



CASTLE OF RESHID BEY, BERWAR

regret to say, declared that what he wanted was his wood, and not the carcase of any Kurd, alive or dead.

Similarly, the Government of Mosul actually ordered the arrest of Reshid Bey, the Agha guilty of the ravaging of the Lizan Valley, in August, 1908.

A police officer was sent up from Amadia to Berwar to arrest him, and actually came to his house. There the Agha sent out word to him, to this effect, "I am very sorry, but it is not at all convenient to me to be arrested just now, as my wife is ill. You had better go back to the man who sent you, and tell him so." Five pounds accompanied the message, which was accepted and delivered accordingly. Of course nothing has been done since, but one may hope that the greater activity of the Van Government, which has really undertaken the disarmament of the Hamidiyé, and the investigation of all the complaints made against Kurds during the last fifteen years (complaints hitherto resting peacefully in official pigeon-holes), may spread a wholesome terror of the law among Kurds generally. Reshid Bey, unluckily, is not of this province, but of Mosul.

II.—1911

When we heard of the great revolution, and of the failure of the counter-revolution in Constantinople, we in Kurdistan did begin to entertain some hope that brighter days were beginning to dawn for the long-oppressed people with whom the Archbishop's Mission deals.

Too small a nation to have any political aspirations, and therefore being content to be loyal Ottoman subjects, they had no need to fear such repressions as Armenians brought on themselves even after the revolution. Too ignorant to understand what the franchise meant, or to understand even the idea of self-government, they were content to leave

the control of the country, and all the government posts, in the hands of Mussalmans, provided only that they were allowed to reap in safety the crops that they had sown, and were not taxed more than two or three times in the year.

We were told, at the revolution, that this remote district must possess its soul in patience for a little, for its turn for reform could not come first. Let the Syrians be patient, and they would be repaid. Well, they have been patient, and most exemplarily so, and for the full three years suggested. Now let us give an instance or two from actual and recent facts to show folk at home what that waiting has implied, and how little the character of the Turkish official has been changed, by his calling himself the subject and agent of a modern and constitutional government.

On February 19th of this year a certain officer of Zaptiehs was sent to collect the taxes of a village in Hakkiari. Arriving at the place, the leader sent for the Reiss, an old man of the name of Aaron, and demanded at once hospitality for himself and his men, specifying what he must have, viz. two sheep and various other delicacies, all difficult to obtain at that time of year. "How can I give you that in this fasting time?" said the Reiss, meaning, not a literal fast, but a time when no delicacies are to be had. On this, the official seized the old man by the hair, and beat him about the head and neck so brutally that he died three days after.

Complaint was at once made to the Kaimakam, a man of Arab blood, who has a great name as supporter of the "Hurriet," and as a friend of the new régime. All redress was refused, and even an examination was not allowed. Mar Shimun took up the matter, on which the Kaimakam endeavoured to persuade him to drop it, on the ground, "It is not for a big man like you to bother with trifles." When reply was made, "I might overlook wrong done to myself,

but this is a son of my nation who has appealed to me," inquiry into the matter was again refused. An appeal was made to Van, resulting only in an order for inquiry on the spot, which order the local officials refused to obey, and which no attempt was made to enforce. A visit to Van and a personal appeal to the Vali produced no better result, and all the while the Patriarch and his people have been left exposed to all the petty persecution (and sometimes more than petty persecution) that an official in Turkey can inflict on those under his sway. All appeals to the Vali were met by the statement, "The man is such a good Constitutionalist."

So the matter rests at the moment, and who can tell what its result will be? We give another case. The district of Tyari is assessed, by ancient custom, at a tribute of £400 per annum. The Syrians assert, and probably with some truth, that they have paid up the last two years as due, and by the amnesty decreed at the time of the Constitution, all arrears were declared to be wiped off. This last statement is not contested by the local officials. The men of one village were up with their flocks as usual in the summer pasture when the Kaimakam passed with his train. They asked if he had come for taxes, as they had their own share ready with them. He said, "No; but have it ready when I return from this journey," and they remained on the upland. Two nights later, troops suddenly attacked the camp, and carried off every sheep there (2500) on account of taxes, and entered the tents, and even tore the clothes off the women who were there, a thing that even Kurdish raiders do not do. At first the villagers thought, pardonably enough, that it was a Kurdish raid, but seeing that it was the men of the Hukümet, offered no open resistance, though at least one child was trampled to death (accidentally, we will hope) in the confusion. The sheep were taken to Julamerk, and again complaint was

made to the Vali. Again that apparently well-meaning official sent an order that was satisfactory, viz.: "Return the sheep, and let them pay money in their place," but again that order was utterly disregarded, and the sheep marched off to another district to be sold.

Mar Shimun of course did his best for his people, but only met with rudeness in return, being told first that he had no right to interfere in the business, and next (when he protested against the obvious iniquity of this confiscating the sheep of one village for the debts of a whole district), "Well, they are your people; it is your business to see this properly assessed among them."

Is it surprising that people now, when they find themselves oppressed, even more than of old, by a government that professes to be constitutional and fair, but which apparently cannot or will not restrain the worst acts of its own underlings, should say, "At least the old régime was not so bad as this. If this is Hurriet, give us back the other." Naturally, this gives an opportunity for intriguers, supporters of the old régime, of which they may very probably take advantage.

Let one other thing be remembered. Mar Shimun could with the greatest ease have made good terms for himself and kept the friendship of the Kaimakam, had he taken the easy path, and not troubled the Government or himself, in his efforts to secure decent treatment for those whom God has entrusted to him. He has taken the difficult path, and has brought an infinity of trouble on himself by an act of real and meritorious self-sacrifice. It is certainly a thing to be remembered to his credit, and we may hope and pray that even in this world his uprightness will not fail of its reward.

W. A. W.

MISSION POLICY—PRESENT AND FUTURE

We are proposing (unless obstacles quite unforeseen at present shall prevent us) to shift the central station of the Mission, with the theological school and (*inshallah*) the press, from their present quarters at Van and Urmi respectively, to Amadia.

In 1903 it was decided that the headquarters of the Mission should be moved to Turkey, as is known to all our friends. We had to settle where this station in Turkey had best be ; and we had as usual to deal with this question on information that was not too complete, and under the pressure of accidental circumstances which did not allow us to select a spot with an eye to Mission needs only. Government in Turkey does not allow the suspected foreigner to live just where he likes. Of course the foreigner has a legal right to do so, and Turkey is in theory a civilised country, but law and theory have not very much to do with practice. “ In the—at present—unfortunately disturbed state of this province the Governor does not wish his dear friend to live in such an uncomfortable place as that village. There are Kurds there, Effendi, and if they should rob you——”

The foreigner who neglects such a hint is likely to find that the Kurds do rob him. “ Dear, dear, it is very sad, but I told you so,” says the sympathising Vali.

British Consuls, too (on whom the responsibility for such an accident would fall), naturally feel they must take all precautions to prevent it, and however much one may wish to be a simple missionary, and to share the sufferings of those whom we try to help, one cannot, in Turkey, get rid of all that our British nationality means, nor is it desirable that we should do so.

Hence, under old conditions, it was impossible for the

new Turkish station to do its work anywhere but outside the wilder districts, and in a Government centre. The experiment of living in one of the semi-dependent "Ashiret" districts of Christians was tried, but was abandoned.

One reason for this abandonment was, it must be owned, inter-tribal jealousy: the presence of the School and the Englishmen meant the influx of a good deal of money into the district selected; why should one be favoured and get it all? Let each valley have its turn, year by year, and let such a trifle as the presence or absence of a suitable house be disregarded as a thing of no importance.

Now there cannot be many districts, one would think, so utterly devoid of a natural centre as that part of Kurdistan where the East Syrian Church is found. The map shows a great Y of mountains (and such mountains!) for the great range of Taurus, running east from the Mediterranean, ends in a fork at this point.

In each of the three angles of the Y lies a plain and a considerable city (Van to the north, Mosul to the south, and Urmi to the east), and the people we work for are scattered irregularly all over this field. Travel from one angle to another is never easy, and may be called impossible during the winter months. However, having tried two of these centres and found them not quite what we wanted, it was natural to think of the third angle and see if it would not do, and to take council also with the Mar Shimun or his advisers on that point. Mosul being still ruled out of court (and that not only by the consideration given above, but also by the fact that Mar Shimun warned us that many mountaineers would hesitate to trust themselves so far from their own glens), it has been decided to try the experiment of settling at Amadia, which will be found a few days' journey north from Mosul, above the foot hills, but at the foot of the higher ranges.

There is no doubt that Amadia is an admirable centre,

geographically, for work in the mountains. The inhabited valleys of the great range (which all discharge southwards, not northwards) form a fan, with Amadia at the handle. No lofty watershed, deep in snow for months together, cuts this place off from the Ashiret districts, as is the case at Van, but for almost the whole year, travel is—not indeed easy, but—as near to being easy as nature ever permits travel in that country to be! Hence villages can be visited throughout the winter, schools inspected, and Qashas kept up to their work. Hitherto this has been a physical impossibility, and the efficiency and value of our work has suffered accordingly. Even an English teacher or priest does not always keep on doing his best when there is no one who can get to him to inspect him. Is it to be expected that the Oriental can do so? Further, boys can get to and from a school at Amadia with far greater ease than to Van. It is true that the greater facility for playing truant is rather a set-off against this (nobody ever ran away from Van after one particular sinner tried it, and very nearly came to his end in the snow), but the advantages outweigh this particular disadvantage.

It must be remembered also that Qudshanis is far more accessible from Amadia than from Van. Easy and habitual access to the Patriarch is necessary for our work, and this has been hitherto supplied by the presence of the Rev. W. H. Browne in Qudshanis. A resident “Apostle” in Qudshanis lives the life practically of a hermit, and the Archbishop of Canterbury has not always a hermit at command; yet a resident there must be, if the Mission is to remain at a spot so remote from Qudshanis as is Van during the long winter! If it were at Amadia, the need would be less marked, owing to the greater facility of communication between the two.

Amadia also offers easy access to various non-Ashiret districts where we have work to do. Bohtan and Shams-

dinan, both of them localities where we have done much less than we should like to do, are within easy reach. Urmi is far more accessible than from Van. In fact, every district is more easily reached from this new centre, save only the scattered villages immediately round the latter, and we feel that we really ought not to sacrifice others to them. One other point. The "Nestorian" Church is not the only Church of Northern Mesopotamia, though it is the only one with which the Church of England has direct official relations. Various others, however, and among them the Jacobites more particularly, have seen the work of the Mission on one Church of the country, and are now asking, informally, whether it cannot be extended to them. Such extension is not within practical politics for us at the moment, but it may always become so, and it is desirable that the Mission should be in a position where these movements can be watched and directed, let us hope for the profit of both Jacobite and Anglican.

Perhaps this may suffice to show friends of the Mission that in moving to Amadia we are moving to a better centre for the continuance of our old work, and where we can, in a measure, guide and help new and important movements. May we ask for the prayers of all friends that we may be guided aright, not only in this change, but in all the great developments that the next few years may bring about in the Churches of the East?

W. A. W.



AMADIA FROM BIBAYDI

CHAPTER XI

LIST OF BOOKS PRINTED AT THE MISSION PRESS IN URMI, WITH SOME NOTES ON THE LITURGIES

THESE books are in the East Syrian or Nestorian type, which differs materially from the Syriac type commonly used in Europe (the Western Syrian or Jacobite), as that alone, with the Estrangela, to which it has a great likeness, is used by the people for whom the books are intended.¹

1. *The Liturgy of St. Adaeus and St. Maris* is printed in

¹ The Liturgies of the Eastern Syrians, now printed for the first time, have been handed down in manuscript from very early times. The Liturgy of the Apostles is perhaps the oldest Liturgy in use throughout Christendom, being probably the ancient rite of the Churches in Mesopotamia, which country was evangelised in the earliest days of the Christian Church. There are many proofs of its antiquity, *e.g.*, the great simplicity of the prayers, those of a later date being more verbose. Its daily use also in earlier times, and the fact that the other liturgies depend on it, not being themselves entire services, but borrowing from it most of the Pro-Anaphoral or introductory portion of the service as far as the *Sursum Corda*, and also the Post-Communion, refer this Liturgy to a still earlier date than their own, which is, however remote.

There are no traces of heresy in it, and there is no evidence that the Nestorians in the sixth century introduced any alterations into this Liturgy, nor would that accord with the practice of the times, for additions were not made to ancient prayers except by general consent. Heretics, even when departing from the faith of the Church, adhered to its customs no less than did the orthodox, boasting that they kept the tradition, and accusing the orthodox of novelty.

This liturgy is ascribed by the Nestorians to Adaeus, their Apostle, and to his disciple Maris. Eusebius relates of *Thaddaeus*, that he was one of the Seventy, and was sent by the Apostle Thomas to King Abgar of Edessa, and preached further also in Mesopotamia. This corresponds generally with the Jacobite tradition about Adaeus that he preached after the Ascension to the Edessenes, converted Mesopotamia, and established the Order of the Ministry there.

full as it is recited at the present day, a large number of manuscripts having been collated for this purpose, the oldest however being only some 300 years old. The manuscripts employed are of different dialects, and follow the different traditions. But none of them have been altered, as of late years has frequently been the case, by the Roman Catholic "Chaldæans" (ex-Nestorians) of Mosul.

The whole has been printed in full, and in its proper order, as given by the great majority of the best manuscripts available; whereas in the manuscripts often only the first words are given, and reference has to be made to the collection of collects for various times prefixed to many manuscript *Takhsas*. The only things not printed in full are (1) the varying *Marmitha* or portion of Psalms on p. 1 (the fixed Psalms are, however, printed in full with their *giuri* or "farcings"). (2) The four lections, from the Old Testament and Acts, St. Paul's Epistles, and the Gospel; (3) The varying *Shurayé* and *Zumaré*, which somewhat correspond to the Gradual. (4) The Litany, "Father of Mercies," said daily by the Deacon, as a rule at every service, and known by heart; the other Litanies, however, which are less known, are printed in full. (5) The *Unitha* of the Sacrament, a varying anthem; and (6) The LORD'S Prayer when repeated.

In this Liturgy the words of Institution are printed as in 1 Cor. xi., although they are not found in any but very modern Mosul manuscripts. They are placed where they occur in the other East Syrian Liturgies, just before the Canon, "For all these aids and graces towards us," and before the Great Intercession and Invocation. The words of Institution and Invocation are marked by large type.

This Liturgy is of primary authority, and is used whenever the other two are not specially ordered.

¹ The Invocation of the Holy Spirit is in the Eastern Church considered a necessary part of the consecration. In all Eastern Liturgies in any language this prayer follows the words of Institution.

2. *The Second Liturgy*, commonly ascribed to Theodore the Interpreter,¹ is appointed to be used from the first Sunday in Advent till Palm Sunday. The first and last portions of this and of the Third Liturgy, and also a few long prayers, are taken from the Liturgy of the Apostles, and are therefore not repeated.

3. *The Third Liturgy*,² commonly attributed to Nes-

¹ So named for his many commentaries on the Holy Scriptures. Born at Antioch, A.D. 330, he was the intimate companion of St. John Chrysostom, both in early education and, after their conversion, in the practice of the ascetic life, and the study of the Bible and of ecclesiastical doctrine under Diodore. St. Chrysostom continued his friend through life, and a most affectionate letter which he wrote to him during his last exile is still extant. Theodore was Bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, on the Pyramus, from the year 390 till his death in 428; he was a conscientious and zealous Bishop, and a great preacher and author. He followed Diodore in keeping to historical exegesis in opposition to Origen's method of metaphorical interpretation. Many fragments of his works occur in Greek Catenae, and some of his books are still extant in Latin, Syriac, and Arabic.

He was not counted heterodox in his lifetime, but after his death some points of his teaching were opposed and condemned, as tending towards Nestorianism.

² It contains in the Invocation the phrase, "changing them (the elements), by the Holy Spirit." This expression is characteristic of the Liturgy of Chrysostom, and is found in no other save in that of the Armenians. This Liturgy was used at Constantinople when Nestorius was Patriarch, 427-431. Thus his followers or he preserved the words according to the rite which he was in the habit of using. This phrase also fixes the date of the Liturgy, for it is certain that after the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431, the Nestorians would not have adopted any rite from Constantinople. Syriac authors also bear witness to its antiquity. There are one or two other resemblances to the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom.

Renaudot does not account the wording of this Liturgy to be so unquestionable as the others. He takes exception to an expression in the prayer preceding the words of Institution, which says that our LORD took "perfect man of a reasonable, intelligent, and immortal soul, and of mortal body of man (so far answering to the Athanasian Creed), *He joined and united it with Him in glory, honour, and power.*" But Renaudot distinctly says that these words are true in a certain manner, and only considers them open to suspicion because it is a Nestorian error to say that the union of GOD and man consists *only* in will, conjunction, and sharing of dignity, not in nature and person.

Further, before it was finally decided to print these Liturgies, they were carefully examined by theologians of our Church, and by Dr. Bright in particular, and pronounced free from heresy.

torius, is celebrated on five days in the year : Epiphany, St. John Baptist, The Greek Doctors, Wednesday of the Fast of the Ninevites, and Maundy Thursday (The Passover). All these fall between Epiphany and Easter. The portion of the Liturgy not taken from the first, or Apostles' Liturgy, is longer than in the case of the second, and contains several Qulasē, or interjectory ejaculations, of some length by the Deacon.¹

4. The *Short Anthems, or Qanun d'khilath*, follow. These are used on the principal feasts of our LORD, among which the Transfiguration and the Holy Cross are included.

5. The *Baptismal Office* follows in full, with psalms, litanies, and lections complete. The close resemblance of its form to that of the Liturgies is referred to by Neale.

The double Invocation is distinguished by large type.

The above form the greater part of the book called the *Takhsa*, or *Order*, and as printed they make a book of 80 pp. quarto, with the rubrics in red and the interwoven cross pattern such as is found in the manuscripts, drawn by the brother of the Catholicos from an old stone cross in the Patriarchal church. For the copies sent to Europe a special title page and introduction has been printed.

THE SECOND PART OF THE TAKHSA

The *Takhsa*, or *Order*, is particularly the priests' book. The second and concluding part begins with the collects at the daily services, which none but a priest may say.

¹ The Feast of the "Greek Doctors" is kept in memory of Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore the Interpreter, and Nestorius. The former is deservedly venerated by the Eastern Church for his learning, sanctity, and courage in withstanding heresy. He was a Presbyter of Antioch, consecrated Bishop of Tarsus in A.D. 399. He was the chief promoter of the national school of scriptural interpretation, based on criticism, philology, and history. He defended the orthodox faith against the Arians and opposed Julian the Apostate.

These rival the Latin collects in terseness, and seldom occupy more than two or three lines. Every priest is supposed to learn them by heart; and besides those which occur in the ordinary course of the service there are a number of extra ones, one of which is said by each of the priests who may happen to be present, so that none may be without some part of the service. They are said with extended arms. It strikes a Western as curious that they never end with "through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." The last words are almost always, ". . . at all times LORD of all, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for ever. Amen."

The shorter blessings, as used at the daily services, follow. These are not usually in the second person plural, but in the first; and are in the form of "The grace of our LORD," though, as one might expect in an Oriental service book, they are somewhat diffuse. Sometimes they are directly addressed to GOD. But they all end with the sign of the Cross made over the heads of the people.

The occasional prayers, which come next, are noteworthy. We find prayers during drought (rain is never too plentiful), at seed time, at wine-making (the vineyards are one of the chief sources of income to the people, on account of the raisins), for the sick, for lunatics, for infants, over the "oil of healing" (but this seems to be obsolete), over one who reads, over a congregation, over a (new?) house, when kissing the Cross, &c., for one going a journey by sea or by land (the former seems to go back to the old days when the people were at Seleucia or Baghdad), by a man for himself, at the *lavabo* in the Liturgy, for one ill of a fever, grace before and after meat, after washing in a stream (after a funeral?), over a bride forty days after marriage, over a child and his mother when she enters the church forty days after her delivery, for a woman who

desires the prayers of the church, and for cloths dedicated to the use of the church.

The office for the preparation of the elements at Holy Communion comes after the occasional prayers. The printing of this office is a great boon to the people, as the manuscripts which contain it are extremely rare, and most priests have had hitherto to depend entirely on their memory for it.

Then comes the office of absolution, said over repentant apostates and other sinners. There are several collects and anthems (which are special in the case of a woman penitent), the fifty-first Psalm, "HOLY GOD," a litany and intercession said over the head of the penitent, who is then signed with the sign of the Cross. One who has voluntarily apostatised is also anointed.

The order for renewing the leaven used at Holy Communion follows. We in the West who are not so thoroughly imbued with symbolical ideas, cannot readily understand how important this seems to an East Syrian, whom it vividly reminds that every Eucharist is not a separate act, but part of and united with the One Offering. This is symbolised by the leaven which is handed on from generation to generation, and is thought to have descended from the Apostles. The service is appointed for Maundy Thursday, the "Passover," as it is called, and is recited by two priests, or by a priest and a deacon. They are instructed to take two parts of fine flour to one of salt, and to add a little olive oil and three drops of water, and mix the whole with what remains of the old leaven and to knead them thoroughly together. Meanwhile they are singing suitable prayers and anthems. In the ordinary household baking the housewife similarly takes some of the sour dough from an old baking in order to "leaven the whole lump." Thus one essential idea of leaven is that of continuation.

Next come the two offices for the consecration of churches, the greater with oil, the lesser without. The former corresponds somewhat with our consecration service, the latter is little more than the service used in many of our churches every year at the anniversary of the dedication. But the Syrians look on even the greater consecration as a blessing on the church, which may be repeated, rather than, as it were, the baptism of the church, which takes place once for all. The lesser office may be said by a bishop or an archdeacon, or by any priest specially commissioned by the bishop; the greater apparently only by a bishop.

Both services consist chiefly of long anthems sung in the sanctuary by the clergy facing all four ways in turn. But part of the office is modelled on the Liturgy (as is also the baptismal service) and we find the Creed, Sursum Corda, and invocation of the HOLY SPIRIT. In the greater service the altar, the four sanctuary walls, and the outer lintel of the sanctuary door are signed with oil. We may notice that the name of the service is not "Consecration of the Church," but "Hallowing of the Sanctuary" (*madh-bkha*). A rubric at the end says that a church once consecrated is never to be without daily service, or the Eucharist on festivals of our LORD, Saints' days, Sundays, and Fridays, save Good Friday only, on which "the Offering is never made." Most Saints' days fall on Friday, by a peculiar arrangement of the East Syrian Kalendar.

These services are followed by very lengthy blessings which are chiefly used at the end of the Liturgy. They are mostly composed on the acrostic principle, but do not call for special remark. The volume, which with the first part, consists of 170 large 4to pages, closes with the general rubrical directions known as "Canons for the careful keeping of the sanctuary." These correspond to the *Cautelae Missae* of the West.

A. J. M.

SYRIAC PRAYERS

A Few Examples, taken somewhat at random, from the Lesser Offices in the Takhsa.

One chief characteristic of Syriac prayers, and indeed of Syriac writings in general, is the habitual use of Scriptural language. Indeed some favourite parts of the New Testament are so constantly dwelt upon as to have influenced the language; thus *yaminayi* or *right-hand ones*, and *semalayi*, *left-hand ones*, are used elliptically to denote those accepted or refused by CHRIST at the last day, Matt. xxv. 33. The right-hand thief also is frequently alluded to in prayers for like admission into Paradise. St. Paul's favourite comparison of the Christian warfare to an athletic contest has brought the Greek words *agony* and *athlete* into such constant use, that an athlete in Syriac writings is used as synonymous with a martyr.

A point which strikes an English reader strongly is the difference between the life of these far-off fellow Christians and ours, in the privations and dangers which they have to dread; as also more happily in their simplicity of life, and pious welcoming of natural pleasures.

FROM THE OFFICE FOR ABSOLUTION

ANTHEM.—“*Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, and hear, and sinners shall return unto Thee.*”

Thou hast not despised offenders and publicans, O LORD, and hast not driven them from before Thy presence O my LORD, for Thou hast said that the whole do not need physicians but those who are afflicted. So we who have done evil things before Thee and are sick in our souls, we beseech Thee, have mercy upon us.

ANTHEM.—“*O Lord Thou knowest.*”

LORD, thou knowest those who need healing, O good Physician of our souls, who calledst the sick and infirm, and didst turn from those who were whole, not that Thou dost neglect the righteous but Thou pitiest sinners. And I who am the first (of sinners) implore Thee that I may be numbered amongst those who at the eleventh hour have entered Thy vineyard, and may be made worthy of Thy gift, O LORD of all.

FROM PRAYERS AT DAWN

Enlighten us, O my LORD, with Thy light and gladden us by Thy coming; rejoice us with Thy salvation and grant us communion in Thy mysteries. Give and vouchsafe unto us with the heavenly multitudes clothed in light, with companies of angels; with voices of thanksgiving to sing glory to Thy glorious Trinity, O Creator ruling over all, Creator Who hast no need of the service of those without; Who hast created light in Thy grace, and ordained darkness in Thy loving kindness, Who givest light to Thy creation, in Thy wisdom, and unattainable wisdom to spiritual and to fleshly beings, O LORD of all.

FROM EVENING PRAYERS

O Thou who magnifiest Thy Church and crownest her with blessings, and coverest Thy athletes with renown, and aidest Thy saints in their glorious, and holy, and life-giving, and godly contests (lit. agonies); we implore Thee, turn O my Lord, pity and have mercy upon us as Thou art wont at all seasons, O LORD of all.

Another.—Make us worthy, O our Lord, of a peaceful evening and refreshing night, and a dawn wherein we hope for blessings and a day of good and righteous works that we may in them please Thy Godhead all the days of our life, O LORD of all.

OTHER PRAYERS

For the Week of the Cross.—Make Thy peace to dwell within all our borders, support Thy Church by Thy Cross and guard her children by Thy grace, that within her we may raise to Thee praise and honour and thanksgiving and worship at every time, O LORD of all.

Prayer when a Man goes on a Journey.—O GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the GOD of the just patriarchs and prophets, GOD the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, I beseech Thee and seek the pity of Thy Majesty at this season when starting on this journey.

May Thy help go with me and Thy grace help me, guarding my soul with my body from all that is contrary, and delivering me from all wiles. As Thou wast with Joseph in the land of Egypt, and with Daniel in the den of lions, and with Ananias and his companions in the fiery furnace, and with Jeremiah in the miry pits, so be Thou with me, O Pitiful One, lightening for me the burden of this journey, overthrowing before me enemies and evil men, being unto me a support and a Saviour; so that the affair on account of which I set out may be rightly accomplished, whilst Thou pourest upon me abundantly Thy good things. I beseech Thee, O Pitiful One, grant me friendly faces where I go and bring me back, O my LORD, so that my mouth may be full of thanksgiving and my tongue of praise, as I return with joy and gladness to my dwelling-place and to my house, so that I may lift up praise, and honour, and thanksgiving, and worship to Thy living and holy name.

Prayer for Help.—Be a guardian who slumbers not to the fortress wherein Thy sheep abide, that it suffer not injury from wolves athirst for the blood of Thy flock; for Thou art an unfailing sea, O LORD of all.

Another.—May we be blessed with Thy blessing, O

our LORD and our GOD, and preserved by Thy providence; may Thy strength come to our aid, and Thy help go with us, and Thy right hand rest upon us; may Thy peace rule amongst us and Thy Cross be unto us a high wall and a refuge, and under Thy wings may we be protected from the evil one and his hosts, at all times and seasons, O LORD of all.

Another.—May Thy blessing, our LORD and our GOD, rest upon Thy people; upon us weak sinners may Thy pity abide continually, O our good Hope and merciful Refuge, Who forgivest our trespasses and sins, O LORD of all.

Prayer in Seed-time.—Glory to Thee who hast planted all trees to bear pleasant fruit for the delight of thy servants; bless, O my Lord, this seed of thy servants, may there be multiplied thence fruit pleasing to Thy Majesty, and may we, ever lift up praise to Thee for that which Thou hast provided for us.

Prayer about Wine.—O Heavenly Drink which flowed from the cluster of blessing, bless, O my LORD, this wine and mingle with it the pity of Thy grace, that it may gladden the hearts, and rejoice the minds of those who drink it, so that rejoicing in the taste of the wine from Thy clusters, we may give thanks and praise to Thee for Thy good gifts to us, now and for ever.

Grace before a Meal.—Stretch forth, O our LORD, and our GOD, the right hand of Thy loving kindness from the height of Thy Holiness; bless and sanctify the food of Thy worshippers, in the Name of Thy glorious Trinity and enrich it with Thy good gifts and blessing, O Father and Son and Holy Spirit for evermore.

Or this.—O Thou who didst satisfy thousands in the desert where they ate of scanty food, bless, O my LORD, this meal that it may be full and rich; let the poor eat and be satisfied, and may orphans be nourished by it, may all

ranks find place at it, and enjoy Thy good gifts. As the table of Abraham, the chosen, and David, king and prophet, and Solomon, with Hezekiah, and the victorious Constantine; so, O my LORD, may the table of Thy servants be blessed and enriched with Thy good gifts and with the abundant mercies of Thy grace. Bless, O my LORD, those who here laboured for it, bless, O my LORD, those who have prepared it, bless, O my LORD, those who eat thereof, bless this house and the dwellers therein. Rest, O my LORD, upon this house and let Thy blessing abide within it, and may the dwellers therein ever be guarded from evil; bless man and beast, bless vineyard and garden, bless seed and harvest, and all of us who are gathered together; now and at all times, and for ever and ever.

Grace after a Meal.—A thousand thousand, and ten thousand times ten thousand givings of thanks to GOD the LORD of all! May this food be multiplied, increased, and remain steadfast and never fail, by the prayers of the twelve Apostles and the just and righteous fathers who were, and are, approved by their LORD in every generation. May this table be as the table of our father Abraham, and not fail or fall short of heavenly benefits in every age that this world remains in; may the houses of the faithful be blessed, may their Eucharists be accepted, may their dead be raised to life, may their trespasses and sins be forgiven; and may they be worthy of the good things of the Kingdom, O Thou glorious feeder of all by Thy grace and mercy, now, and at all times, and for ever. Our Father, &c.

BLESSING

The peace of the FATHER be with us, and the love of the SON be amongst us, may the HOLY SPIRIT guide us according to His goodwill, and upon us be His mercies and pity at all times and seasons, O LORD of all.

Another.—May Thy peace, O my LORD, dwell in us and Thy tranquillity rule in us and Thy love be increased amongst us all the days of our lives, O LORD of all.

NOTE ON THE TANURA

One finds that living among a primitive Christian people such as are the Syrians, with customs unaltered from the earliest times, one is continually getting side-lights upon Holy Scripture not to be met with in any Commentary. Now the word "oven" occurs about a dozen times in the Bible (exclusive of those books commonly called Apocrypha, in which it occurs four times), and in every case I have not the least doubt the form of oven intended is that in which my meals are cooked to-day, and which, in slightly modified form, is in general use (I believe) throughout the East. It is a deep round hole in the earth, lined with smooth, well-burnt clay. Sometimes it is in the centre of the living room (what in Yorkshire is called "the house," and curiously enough, out here "the *baita*," which means the same, even when there are other rooms); sometimes it is in the open yard outside. Fire is kindled in this oven from wood and dry manure, and when its sides are nearly red-hot, the fire is extinguished, a big earthenware lid is put on the mouth of the whole to keep in the heat, and whatever is to be cooked is put inside. Meat is generally in pots let down by iron hooks into the hot embers, but it can be hung, as was doubtless the Pass-over lamb, by a spit and roasted. Bread is made in thin sheets, which are clapped on to the sides of the oven when they are partially cooled, and is baked in a few moments. Any reference Bible will enable you to find the passages in which "oven" occurs; I will only briefly mention one or two. It is interesting, by the by, to note that the word in the Hebrew of the Old Testament is *tannur*; the Syrian

word now in use is *tanura*; the Persians use the term *tanur*, which is practically the same. The frogs got into the ovens of the Egyptians (Exod. viii. 3); it is easy to imagine how they would fall in when the lid was off, but in addition they would get into the flue or chimney, a hole in the earth a few feet from the *tanura*, connected with it in order to create a draught. The "fiery oven" (Ps. xxi. 9) is the fierce, red-hot *tanura*; and the same figure occurs in other passages. "Our skin was black like an oven" (Lam. v. 10)—the inside of the *tanura* is jet black, and smooth like marble, but entirely free from smoke-black. Our LORD'S own words (St. Matt. vi. 30), "grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," are rendered clearer when we realise that grass is always used for kindling the fire in the *tanura*.

F. F. I.

FRAGMENTS FROM A SYRIAC MANUSCRIPT

Man without charity is like food without salt.

A Patriarch without charity is as the sun without its radiance.

A Metropolitan without charity, as the mind without understanding.

A Bishop without charity, as a shepherd without his crook.

A Priest without charity, as a plant upon a rock.

A Deacon without charity, as an eagle without wings.

A Youth without charity, as a city without a wall.

A Maiden without charity, as a lamp without oil.

A Monk without charity, as a fortress without water.

One who fasts without charity, as chaff which is scattered by the wind.

A Rich man without charity, as wood which is worm-eaten.

A Poor man without charity, as a soldier without armour.

Why does a Deacon wear the stole on his left shoulder ?
Because our LORD bore the Cross on His left shoulder when He went forth to be crucified.

In what language is praise rendered to GOD in Heaven ?

In that language which GOD at the first spake with Adam, and Adam with GOD. And that language is Aramaic, which is Syriac ; a language full and rich, powerful in expression, simple in diction, and exact in utterance.

Why was not this language, which is the father of all tongues, on the title which Pilate placed upon the Cross ?

Because the Syrians had no part in the crucifixion of CHRIST, but the Greeks, the Romans, and the Hebrews. Pilate was a Roman, Herod a Greek, and Caiaphas a Hebrew ; but there was no Syrian there.

As a wall keepeth a vineyard from wild beasts, so does fasting protect a man from evil passions.

THE EAST SYRIAN BURIAL SERVICE

The Burial Service of the East Syrians is partly known in England through Dr. Badger's translation of the Order for the Burial of Priests. But as we are now printing the Order for the Burial of the Laity, a short account of the service may not be amiss. In printing this book we have given it a more liturgical form than was attempted in our earlier publications, and have experienced much difficulty owing to the endless confusion, variations, and cross-references of the manuscripts, of which we have used about ten, representing three main traditions, Urmi, Jilu, and Alqosh. One source of delightful confusion is the custom, which increased as authoritative control over the service books

decreased, by which copyists inserted anthems and hymns which were locally popular. We have tried to meet this by printing, with few exceptions, only what is common to two out of our three families, giving the rest in an appendix. Another change we have made in setting up the type, giving up the old manner of printing everything as if it were continuous prose. We have been free with headings, and poetry we have printed as such; the reason why the manuscripts do not do this probably being the expense of paper. The book is printed in large type, like the Liturgy, and we make it more useful as well as handsome by setting the services for men and women in two columns, which has the double advantage of providing a shorter line, and of avoiding printing common matter twice.

As the Syrians do not perform any part of the service for laymen in church, the house is the scene of the greater portion. There the body is washed and prepared for burial, for which the directions provide differently in the case of laity and clergy. A special direction is inserted to the effect that a cross shall not be placed in the coffin, "that it be not a type of those that hid the Cross of Our LORD"; perhaps a reference to the tradition that the Jews buried the Cross after the Crucifixion. While this preparation is being made the priests sing three "Mutwas," which consist each of five prayers, two "Shurayas" (portions of psalms, as, for instance, lxxxviii., xii.), and an "Unitha" (a long anthem, or, rather, succession of anthems). Each "Mutwa" concludes with three "Madrashas" and two prayers. These "Madrashas" are the most striking part of the service, rhythmic in form, and very dramatic in diction. A large selection provides for all sorts and conditions of men, from patriarchs to mothers of only sons, from rich men to the murdered and drowned. The larger proportion of these latter is a sad reflection of Syrian life, and the fierceness of some of the last shows the terrible effect of

centuries of lawless oppression. I give an example of several kinds.

For a Scholar. Antiphon: So the heart of the teachers is broken: and the fathers sit sorrowing. Broken is the writing tablet for its master: and the book turned upon its face. *Verses:* Wasted the study and learning: the spelling too and the reading. For corrupting death plucketh: the fruit of learning and study. Bitter though the parting: of sons from fathers. Yet hath he healing medicine: the remembrance of life from the dead.

For any Man. Antiphon: Blessed is He at Whose voice the dead rise from the grave: and Who clotheth them with rich splendour on the day of resurrection. *Verses:* Saith the soul, Remain in peace, O sinful body: and house from which I gained nought but sins. Saith the body, If I wake from my sickness: I will deck thee with vigil and shining fast. Saith the soul, Remain in peace, grieve not: for CHRIST the King cometh at last and raiseth thee. Saith the body, Depart in peace, soul that sinned not¹: thou hast left me ruined in the holes of the earth until the resurrection.

For a Child (by S. Efrem). Antiphon: The first fruits which before Summer: was freed from all stains. While yet in his parents' arms: murderous death devoured. *Verses:* Plant young and beloved: transplanted to the blessed vineyard. Death shook his axe: and cut it off from the land of life. The fruitful vine and pure: decked with branches and tendrils. By the scythe of bitter death: was harvested from life.

For a Child. Antiphon: Blessed is CHRIST who promised the kingdom to childhood: and took it up and set it in the barn of spiritual life. *Verses:* O parents, for whom do ye shed tears of sorrow: for the heir and inheritor of the kingdom on high. Among the companies of heaven are

¹ An expression to be judged rather by the tone of the dialogue than doctrinally.

children gathered : and the Holy Spirit as a Mother cherishes them.

The limitations of space forbid further quotations, but these which are here given will perhaps give an idea of the character of the more poetical parts of the service. All that refers to the children is very pleasing, and the pathos in places is exquisite ; a clear belief is evident in the freedom of baptized infants up to seven years from mortal sin. Less satisfactory is a strange rubric found in several manuscripts directing a mutilated service, which differs less in character than in quantity, to be used for those children who "have received the saving sign of the Cross," that is, who have been signed with oil, not baptized with water, in the name of the Holy Trinity.

The service in the house concludes with lections from the Scriptures, chosen, like all the Syrian lections, with extreme aptness. The wonderful last chapter of Ecclesiastes is read over young men ; over the aged a passage from Job ; from Ecclesiasticus over the rich ; the story of the death of Abel over the murdered. It is characteristic of the Syrians that neither the modern English lection for the Burial Service from Corinthians, nor the ancient Western Gospel is contained in their long lectionary of the dead. Less commendable is the frequency with which passages breathing the fiercer spirit of Israel, as well as the pre-Christian self-justification of Job, are chosen. This is very prominent in the various special lections, and anthems for the murdered ; and the tendency is bitterly illustrated in this among other passages : "Blessed be Thou who terrifiest the wicked by fire," and by reference to the "victorious blood," not that flowed from Calvary, but which cries for vengeance from the ground.

The Madrashas already referred to are full of most dramatic poetry, some exceedingly beautiful. Metaphor abounds, almost wholly Biblical. Every well-known story

of Old and New Testament is laid under contribution; the history of Joseph, of Isaac, of Elisha, and Job, the parable of the Ten Virgins, the Widow's Son of Nain, each appears many times. Nor are we less struck by the continuous reference to the Precious Body and Blood, to the oil of Confirmation, the water of Baptism, which have sealed the departed.

The chants which follow the lections, said partly in the house (or, as seems to have been formerly the custom, in the church), and partly while the body is carried to the grave and laid to rest, are full of such references, and of extreme length and tediousness. The conclusion of the service consists of praise and thanksgiving.

Throughout the whole service perhaps the most remarkable feature is the primitive simplicity and naturalness of the view of death.

The departed has started on a journey of which little is known, except that the bourne is Paradise, for those who go out in peace. He speaks to those who are left, and they answer; each asks the prayers of the other, and the departed prays to be remembered at the altar, where he has so often offered or received.

The whole conception of the life beyond the grave is vague and shadowy; "Sheol" and Paradise are used almost indiscriminately, and the "Abrahamic bosom" is an ever recurring phrase. Sadness is the prevalent note, a quiet acquiescence in the temporary victory of "Devouring, murderous Death," which recalls the teaching of Theodore. There is little of the grand victorious march of our English service, or of the quietness of the rest and hope in Christ which we connect with early Christian thought on death. We might trace a connection between this and the still less attractive view that seems to be taken of sin. This is again thoroughly in accordance with Theodore's teaching, emphasis being laid far more on the dismal loss of joy

and life caused by the Fall, than on the inherent sinfulness of each man that makes death the punishment of sin, of which each is equally guilty. Hence the strange habit of confession of sin, just such as we see in every-day Syrian life, without true contrition, and with a recurring tendency to shift the blame elsewhere, and justify self. The dialogue already quoted between the soul and body amply illustrates this.

Our limits are already exceeded, but perhaps allow the remark, that the Syrians are a very living example of the truth that creed makes character, and that much that is so difficult to deal with in them is traceable to the dogmatic atmosphere in which for centuries they have been bred.

O. H. P.

ON THE STUDY OF ANCIENT SYRIAC IN EUROPE

Among the reasons which may be urged for the study of Ancient Syriac among Christian nations, some three may be regarded as paramount. First, the few sayings of our LORD of which the original is preserved are in an Aramaic dialect; and this makes it likely that the true import of many of His sayings is to be reached through the Aramaic language, though we need not necessarily infer that Aramaic was the tongue which He habitually used. Indeed, the condition of this country in which two or three languages are in ordinary use, the official language of the State, the vernacular of the Mussulmans, and the vernaculars of the Syrians and Armenians, probably offers a close analogy to the condition of Palestine in our Saviour's time, when Greek, Hebrew, and various dialects of Aramaic were probably in use simultaneously. Secondly, the discovery and deciphering of ancient texts have greatly confirmed the *antiquity* of the Aramaic language; for though the earliest Aramaic inscriptions which we possess are not earlier than the ninth century B.C., there is evidence from

Egyptian documents of the expansion and importance of Aramaic at a very much earlier period. And indeed the fact of Aramaic being used as the language of diplomacy and commerce in the eighth and following centuries B.C. points to a time when those who spoke it must in some way have won for themselves influence far and wide.

But thirdly, the branch of the Aramaic language which we call Syriac forms a link in the chain which led to the European renaissance. When the classics were forgotten in Europe, Baghdad became interested in them; and the Syrians were the intermediaries by whom the Greek learning was transmitted to the Arabs. From the latter, Europe became acquainted afresh with the old philosophy and medicine, and the first Latin translations of Aristotle were from Arabic translated from Syriac.

The study was, however, pursued with little vigour in Europe till the middle of the nineteenth century, when it shared in the general interest which the Oriental languages began to enjoy. Especially the acquisition of the Nitrian manuscripts, for the British Museum in London, put into the hands of scholars a quantity of material illustrative of the earliest period of classical Syriac literature, much of which was given to the world by Cureton, Lagarde, Land, and Wright.

The first book printed in Europe in the Estrangelo character since 300 years was Lagarde's *Reliquiae Juris Ecclesiasticae Antiquissimi*; a quarter of a century before Bernstein had found difficulty in procuring even a fount of Maronite type. Since the year 1850 the printing of books in the Estrangelo character has been common, and since 1880 the Nestorian character has also become familiar in Europe. The works of great Syrian authors, from S. Ephraem to Bar-Hebraeus, have been sought out and issued in convenient forms. The fact that a history of Syriac literature, issued in Paris in 1900, reached a second

edition immediately, and that the article on Syriac literature in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* was one of the few in the whole work reprinted in book form, illustrate the keenness with which the study is now being pursued.

To the ancient versions of the New Testament far more attention has hitherto been paid than to those of the Old. There are, indeed, numerous dissertations, by candidates for the Ph.D. degree in Germany, in which the character of the Peshitta translation of different books of the Old Testament is discussed; but these works are ordinarily immature, and rarely contain more than collections of facts. Yet the value of the Peshitta version of the Old Testament is great, being a witness for the state of both text and interpretation at a time when the controversy between Jews and Christians was raging, but the final conquest of the world for Christianity had not been secured. The tendency to alter the text for dogmatic purposes was then at work, but probably achieved its main results after the Peshitta was finished; there are cases, therefore, in which the Peshitta gives evidence of the true form of texts which have since been altered. Since, moreover, it was made with the assistance of Jews (direct or indirect) it is a source of information concerning Jewish exegesis some centuries earlier than any other Eastern source.

D. S. M.

Written at Sir, above Urmi, June 17th, 1901.

THE MISSION STAFF, PAST AND PRESENT

- 1886. Rev. A. J. Maclean, Canon of Cumbrae, Head of the Mission.
Now Bishop of Moray and Ross.
- 1886. Rev. W. H. Browne, LL.M., Curate of St. Columba's,
Haggerston. Died Sept. 1910.
- 1887. Rev. A. H. Lang, Curate of St. Paul's, Brighton. Subse-
quently Six Preacher of Canterbury Cathedral and Organising
Secretary.
- 1888. Rev. A. R. Edington, M.A., Curate of All Hallows, Poplar.
Head of the Mission 1893-1898.
- 1889. Rev. Y. M. Neesan, East Syrian in American Orders.
Resides at Urmi.
- 1890. Rev. A. S. Jervis, B.A., Curate of St. Andrew's, Worthing.
Died Oct. 1891.
- 1892. Rev. D. Jenks, M.A., Curate of Heene, Worthing. Returned
in 1899.
- 1892. Rev. S. J. Daltry, M.A., Deacon from Golden-Hill, Stoke-on-
Trent. Returned 1897.
- 1893. Rev. F. F. Irving, B.D., Curate of St. Saviour's, Leeds.
Returned 1898.
- 1893. Edward H. Heazell, from Nottingham, Bursar and Architect to
the Mission. Returned 1899.
- 1895. H. H. Tidswell, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. Invalided home 1896.
- 1897. Rev. O. H. Parry, M.A., Curate of St. Ignatius', Sunderland.
Head of the Mission, 1897-1907.
- 1898. Rev. F. N. Heazell, M.A., Curate of St. Michael's, Croydon.
Organising Secretary, 1904.
- 1900. Arthur Longden, from Sunderland. Bursar, 1900-1905.
- 1902. Rev. W. A. Wigram, M.A., Curate of St. Barnabas, Hendon,
Sunderland. Head of the Mission, 1907-1912.
- 1903. Rev. W. S. Bowdon, M.A., Curate of Aston Brook. Returned
1908.
- 1907. Rev. F. J. Blamire Brown, M.A., Curate of High Wycombe.
Returned 1912.
- 1910. Rev. G. J. MacGillivray, M.A., Curate of Parish Church,
Croydon.
- 1911. Rev. J. D. Barnard, M.A., Curate of St. Clement's, York.
- 1912. Rev. O. F. Spearing, M.A., Curate of Abingdon.

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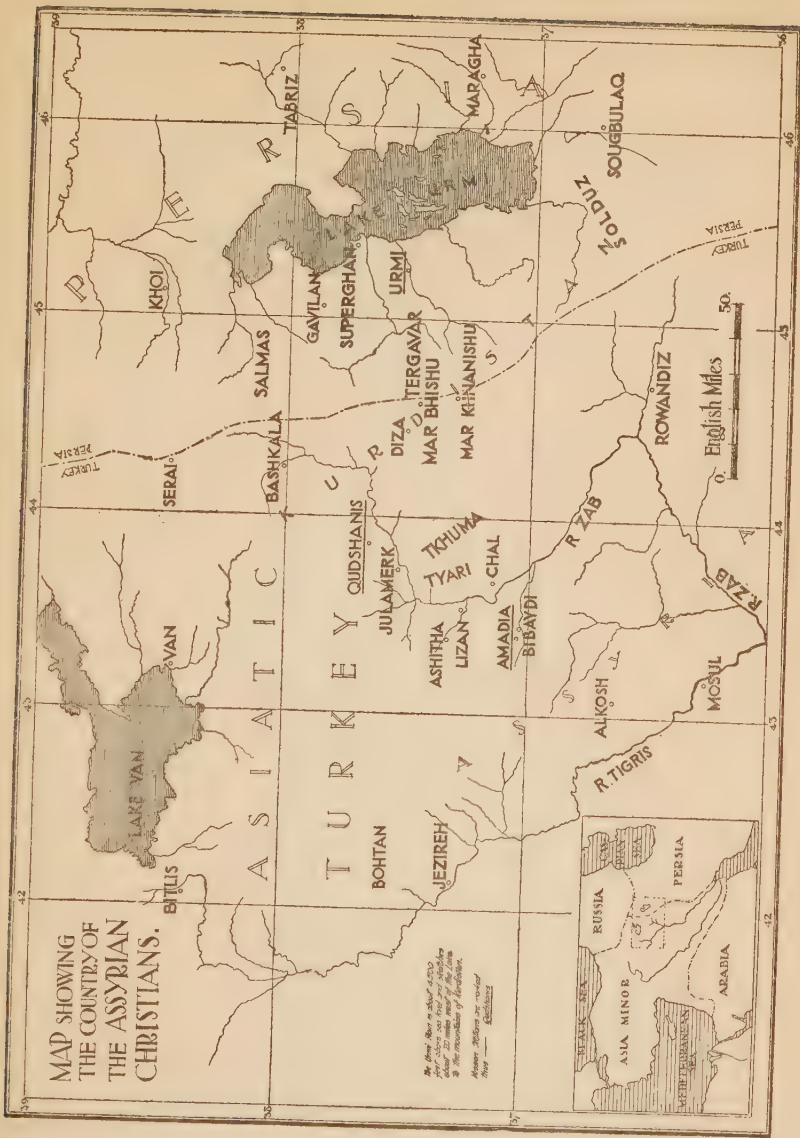
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